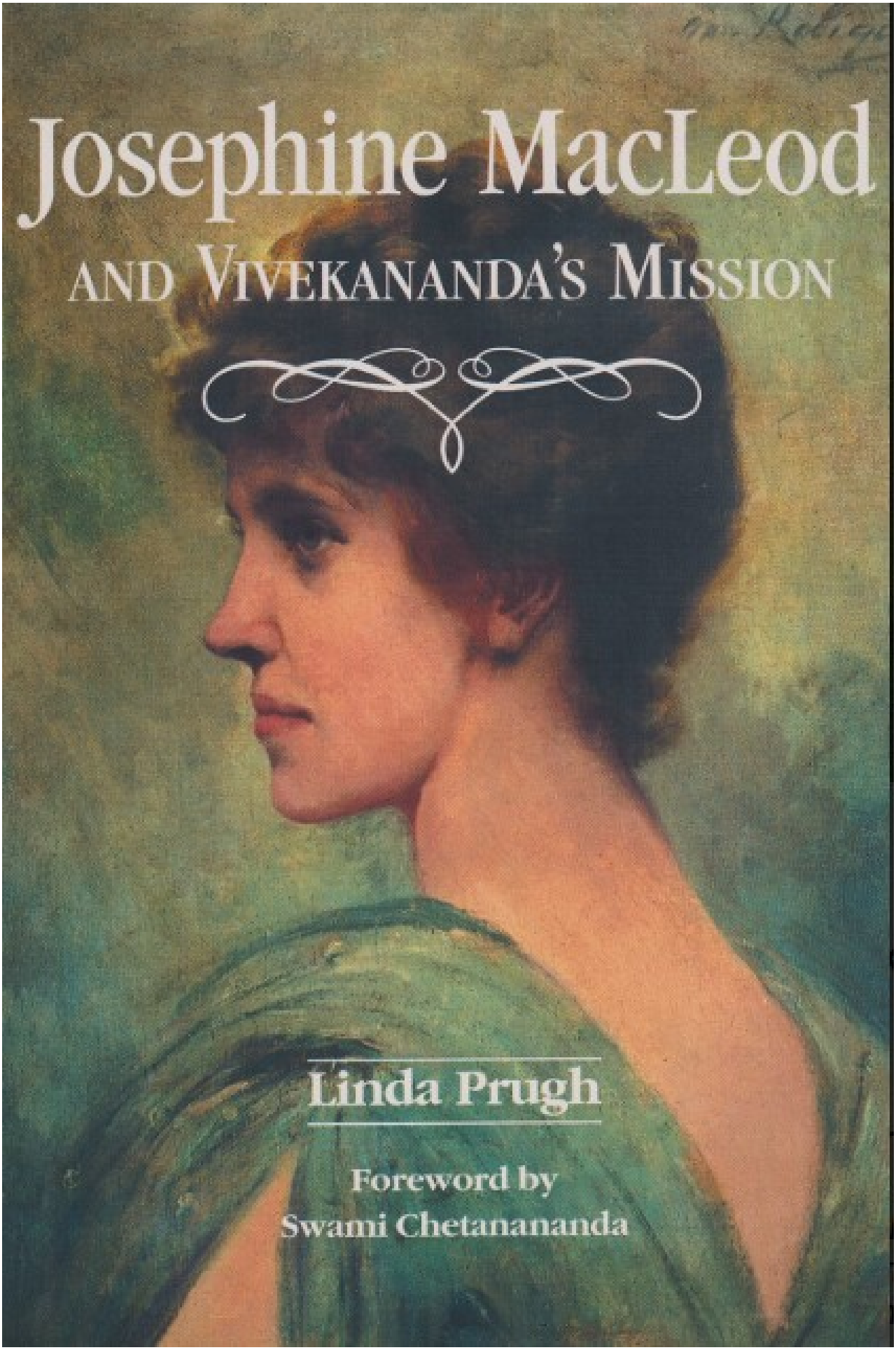
Josephine MacLeod
AND VIVEKANANDA'S MISSION
Linda Prugh
Foreword by
Swami Chetanananda

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-:Chapter One:-

READINESS AND BIRTH (Part One)

"[Vivekananda] said that the difference between you and everyone else lay in the fact that others had matured since he had met them—but you were 'fully developed' before he ever saw you."

— Sister Nivedita, Letter to Josephine MacLeod, June 25, 1899

In the 1850s in America, when a baby boy was born, his parents would start dreaming of what he might become: doctor, lawyer, minister, senator. And when a baby girl was born, her parents would start dreaming of what she might become by marrying: doctor's wife, lawyer's wife, minister's wife, senator's wife. A boy was seen as one who would bring pride to his parents through his own efforts and continue the family name. A girl, on the other hand, would bring pride to her parents through marriage. As for her family name, it would either be relinquished altogether upon marriage, or relegated to the middle position, followed by a new last name. If, for example, Jane Ellen Smith married Thomas Andrew Jones, her new name would be Jane Smith Jones, and she would be referred to as Mrs. Thomas A. Jones. Thomas Andrew Jones would remain Thomas Andrew Jones from birth to death.

Generally speaking, nineteenth century mothers trained their little girls in many of those skills which they would need when married. Girls were taught how to manage and decorate a household, and how to sew and do fine handwork, such as embroidery. They were also taught the niceties of life, such as how to write thank you notes and pour tea properly. And since they were taught not to speak too loudly or too much, many of them developed the fine art of being good listeners. It was through such training that girls became "young ladies."

Young ladies were taught that they were "the weaker sex" and that they were not expected to be able to climb up into a horse carriage by themselves or lift a heavy package or open a door. A young woman's goal was to find a suitable husband whom she could look up to and depend on for the rest of her life. She, in turn, would make him happy by being gracious and beautiful, raising bright children for him, and keeping a peaceful home so he could concentrate on his career. A popular saying was, "Behind every successful man is a woman." It was through knowing that she had contributed to the accomplishments of her husband and children that a woman was to find happiness and a sense of self-worth.

Josephine MacLeod "stumbled into a family that gave freedom," as she often said,[1] and her life did not lead her through this traditional pattern. She belonged to that rare breed (female or male) who, from their very childhood, want freedom so badly that they learn to quickly detect and gracefully dodge many of the usual sources of attachment that present themselves in the average lifetime.

Ahead of Josephine MacLeod lay a magnificent future based on love and service which would certainly include but not be limited to a single family. Rather, she would spend her life "reaching out and giving with both hands"[2] to people the world over, and in a wondrous variety of practical ways. Joe's drive towards freedom and independence protected that future. In addition, there were many circumstances and character traits which just naturally aided and abetted her as a maverick: able to survive and serve in her own unique style as an independent

woman, one who was to become “great without the help of any man,” as Swami Vivekananda would one day say of her[3].It may also be surmised that born in a male body, this person would have been great without the help of any woman.

[1] Culme-Seymour Coll., 2-28-39.[2] Helen Kazantzakis, Nikos Kazantzakis (A Biography) [hereafter Nikos Kazantzaki.sl, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1968), p. 353.
[3] CW5:163.

THE MACLEOD STYLE

One of Josephine's favorable character traits was a nomadic tendency which seems to have been prevalent in her family for at least two prior generations. Her paternal grandparents had married in their homeland of Scotland, and travelled first to Nova Scotia and then to New Orleans, Louisiana for their wedding trip. Their fifth child, John David MacLeod, was born in 1823, after their return to Nova Scotia. At the age of nineteen, he moved with his brother to Providence, Rhode Island to live with a sister. On January 27, 1845 David married Mary Ann Lennon in Mobile, Alabama.[1]

Between 1849 and 1854, David and Mary Lennon MacLeod had four children, all born in different cities: Taylor in New Orleans, Louisiana in 1849; Martha (Mattie) in Mobile, Alabama in 1851; Elizabeth or Besse (pronounced Bess and also called Betty), in Cincinnati, Ohio on January 25, 1852; and Donald in St. Louis, Missouri in 1854. Later, after Josephine's birth, on December 26, 1858 in Elgin, Illinois, the family moved again at least twice, living for a time in Detroit, Michigan, then moving to Chicago, Illinois.[2]

Many a circumstance of her early years, including the moving about of her family, would play its role in preparing Josephine MacLeod for the extraordinary life she was to live. In later years, at the age of eighty, she would write: "Life always seems to me to be just beginning -- no five-year-old ever felt it more than I do -- and as at five I had the dream in Detroit that if I'd dig in the garden I'd find gold (and did find the gold drop of an earring), so now I'm looking, digging into and finding wonders everywhere, now especially that my body has stopped worrying me...."[3] In her life Josephine would need that ability to dig and find wonders in many places and people, to adapt constantly to new beginnings, and to recognize gold when she came across it. And for this, the nomadic tendency was quite necessary and was built nicely into her background with the constant moving about of her predecessors.

The fact that her parents named four of their children after famous historical figures also seems significant. Taylor was named for President Zachary Taylor; Martha for President George Washington's wife; Besse for Elizabeth I, known as Queen Bess, and also for Betty's paternal grandmother; Donald for his paternal grandfather; and Josephine for the Empress Josephine Bonaparte[4]. It would one day be remarked about Betty's and Josephine's names, "They never quite got over it."[5]

It is to be noted too that their paternal great-grandmother was Lady Jane Gordon, daughter of the Earl of Sutherland of Inverness, Scotland.[6] There are some who knew Josephine MacLeod who might say she never got over *that*; that she sometimes put on an air of someone born to a high place.[7] The fact is that there were to be times in her life when an empirical air would be helpful to Josephine MacLeod in dealing with friends in high places just to help other friends who were in need.

However, Josephine was not to be trapped within the image of a single name. Many were the names she would use in her lifetime, coined and used according to her mood; and many were the names that would be given to her -- coined according to the user's particular perception of her multi-faceted personality. There were the names Josie, Jojo, and Joy; there were Jayananda and Josananda; and the most enduring -- Joe, Jaya, Yum-Yum, and Tantine. She usually referred to herself as Joe or Jojo (and in later years, Tantine), sometimes playfully combining names to emphasize a particularly happy state of mind.

Of her father, David MacLeod, Joe once stated that, though thought by his grandchildren to have been a doctor, he had actually been in real estate. "We had twelve houses on one block," she said; "ours was on the corner. Father was away from home a good deal. I can't say why. Everyone came to tell him of their troubles. He was always very kind."[8]

Joe also recalled that her father, a Presbyterian, prayed a great deal every day. Sometimes his prayers were, in fact, the outcome of his need for cash, and Joe remembered her mother, having

heard David's prayers, quietly slipping some dollar bills between the leaves of his Bible, where he would certainly come across them.[9]

About her mother, Mary MacLeod, Joe remembered that she was always at home; that she spent a lot of time in the garden; and that at the end of her long drawing room was a platform for music and singing. Once she stated: "Mother had forty silk dresses all alike with openings down the front to show a flowered petticoat. She liked to entertain."[10]

[1] Late and Soon, pp. 33-34.
[2] Late and Soon, p. 34.
[3] Culme-Seymour Coll., March 21, 1939.
[4] Late and Soon, p. 34.
[5] Late and Soon, p. 26.
[6] Late and Soon, p. 33.

SO THIS IS REALITY

In 1870 before there were appendectomies, Mary MacLeod died of appendicitis. The death of a parent is traumatic at any age, but it was especially so for Joe, coming as it did when she was going on twelve years, coming as it did when she was present. “If your mother goes on sleeping,” Joe’s father told her on October 1, “she will be better in the morning.” “But look, Father, she is not breathing,” cried the little girl.[1]

The wrenching loss of her mother marked the end of a reasonably happy childhood. It was surely Joe’s first truly sad experience in life; one that taught her that people she loved would not be hers forever. With it must have come a vague idea about detachment in relationships.

In those days, it was not unusual for a girl to marry during her early- to mid-teens. Had her mother lived a few more years, she might naturally have encouraged Joe to follow the traditional life pattern that called for finding a husband. But that was not to be. As for receiving any pressure from her father to follow a traditional lifestyle and seek a husband, he himself was, within a year or so, preoccupied with a new wife -- a Mrs. Ranstead, who was a widow with grown children. Joe was stunned. She did not understand how her father could even think of bringing another woman into her mother’s house. However, Joe’s indignation was calmed down somewhat when Mattie appealed to her sense of practicality by asking, “Do you want to look after Father all your life?”[2]

In later years, Joe said of her stepmother, “We did not, of course, care for her, but we all had good manners.”[3] From this bitter experience came another beneficial lesson in detachment. Joe also began to learn the art of smoothly masking indignation with controlled diplomacy. It was a skill which she would use with great dignity many times in her life.

Five years before their mother’s death, Joe’s brother Taylor MacLeod, then sixteen years old, had, without his father’s knowledge, enlisted to fight in the Civil War. He had been held in the infamous Libby Prison but had escaped and run to Argentina, where he married a fourteen-year-old heiress, igniting the wrath of the bride’s brothers. She and an unborn child were later killed, and Taylor returned home broken hearted. Soon, however, he induced his brother, Donald, to go with him to Arizona to try silver mining.

In 1884, news of Donald’s death in Arizona reached David MacLeod in Chicago. He had been killed by a man who had been threatened by Taylor. It was later recalled by Betty that their father never forgave Taylor for Donald’s death and that he banished him from the family circle. Once Betty stated, “Father became old and lived with his sorrows and his God with whom I heard him talk as with an intimate friend.” Taylor MacLeod spent two years relentlessly searching for his brother’s killer, and never left the West[4]. From Joe’s life, one sees that she shared with him a spontaneous, rather daring nature, and the ability to persevere.

It was after their mother’s death that Mattie MacLeod, now nineteen years old, developed a common cold which led to severe lung trouble. David MacLeod sent her to Colorado to recuperate. Upon Mattie’s return from Colorado in 1871, she married and one year later died. Betty once remarked about Mattie: “She was the prize of the family with a beautiful nature; a disposition like Joe’s, and grace itself.”[5]

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[1] Late and Soon, p. 41.
[2] Late and Soon, p. 43.
[3] Late and Soon.
[4] Late and Soon, pp. 36-37.
[5] Late and Soon, p. 39

THE BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE

After Mattie's death, Betty, now twenty years old, and Joe, now fourteen, were sent east to live with an aunt in Brooklyn, New York. It was 1872, and Brooklyn was not yet a borough of New York City, not yet connected to it by the Brooklyn Bridge. Until 1898 New York City itself was limited to the slender island of Manhattan, only thirteen miles long and two miles wide at its widest point[1]. But since the opening of the Erie Canal in 1825, which made New York City the dominant American seaport, it had become one of the most exciting and fastest-growing metropolises in the world. Of the five million immigrants who came to the United States between 1820 and 1860, seventy percent entered the country through New York. It was indeed the busiest port in the Western Hemisphere.[2]

More important to the two young women: New York, already the very hub of America's wealth, culture, and thought, was just a ferry boat ride away from Brooklyn.

To Betty and Joe, *everything that mattered was in New York*: it was the best. In their eyes, the most cultured, the most colorful, the most fashionable people walked its streets, and in those days there were free art galleries, concerts, and lectures where one could *mix* with the cultured, the colorful, and the fashionable. Joe's nature from her childhood was that of a student. She loved to meet new people and learn new things. Later in life she would often say: "My religion is to learn! I expand with fresh ideas!"[3] So New York was a great treasure house for Joe.

In 1875 Betty MacLeod informed her father that she wished to marry William Sturges, a widower thirty years older than she. Her father sent her off to Paris to see something of the world first and perhaps reconsider. She remained there for one year, then returned to the States, and received her father's consent to marry Sturges. A few days after promising to marry him, she received another, more attractive proposal, but she kept her word and married Sturges. For her he represented a great and bold contrast to the way she and Joe had been brought up. Frances Leggett, Betty's daughter by her second marriage, explained what really happened to Betty MacLeod when she went to Europe. In *Late and Soon: the Transatlantic Story of a Marriage*, she wrote:

Nothing is known of her year abroad save that she was received by friends and poured tea at the American Embassy. But if she did not lose her heart in Paris she lost it to the great world it represented. Wonderful and exciting, it typified her first dreams come true. She had found her bent. She had always known it could not be in the dim half-light of her father's Presbyterian parlour. She had always dreamed of this other world of beauty and laughter and gracious ease. And having seen it, she found it all the easier to decide upon returning to America to accept the hand of William Sturges. Would he not bring her here and to London and other places of enchantment in the great world -- the world to which (as she now knew) she herself belonged? It was just his flair for life, his energy and imagination, that had so captivated her and Joe. Yes, Joe too -- for did he not offer Joe a home, insist even that Betty's sister live with them?[4]

Betty did not so much marry William Sturges as she married his way of life. She was now twenty-four years old; Joe was eighteen.

William Sturges was in the very classic sense an entrepreneur who brought together innovative people with ideas and ambitious people with money. His home, and now Betty and Joe's, was wherever the business was. Their brownstone house in New York City, at 21 West Thirty-fourth Street, was an elaborate three-storey building with a basement and servants' quarters. With the birth of Alberta Sturges, September 17, 1877, and Hollister Sturges, June 14, 1879, the family was suddenly big and busy.

William Sturges sometimes had to move fast in his work, and it was not unusual for him to ask Betty if she could have everyone (including the children, Joe, and servants) ready to travel somewhere the next day. Betty never said no, and it was in this fast-paced, unpredictable setting that Joe developed the prized skill of being able to pack on a moment's notice and in general organize a crowd. Frances Leggett wrote about it:

They went everywhere. Betty went with her husband, and the children and Joe went with them. They were forever on the move. They never knew where they would be going next. True, they had their house in New York, but they were seldom in it. “Can you and Joe and the children sail tomorrow and let the house?” Mr. Sturges one day asked Betty at luncheon. “Of course,” she replied. And the next day they sailed and the house was let. It would be a six weeks’ trip, he told them. They were gone six years. They had an apartment [in Paris], a house in May-fair [in London], and another home on the moors of Scotland[5].

Joe, who hated planning anything in advance, loved the planlessness of this Sturges way of life; and in any event she was technically on her own anyway, and under no obligation to remain always with the family. At one point in 1882, she stayed with a French family in Passy, studying a little French and art. For Joe, it is said, “a little” was enough. And apparently Joe was either one of those people for whom a little really is enough or she understated her own talents, for there is ample evidence that she became fairly fluent in French[6]. The fact is that Joe had no mood to spend a lot of time all at once in any place: not in books, not in conversations, not in places. “I got the gist of it,” she would often say regarding a book or a conversation. Joe was more interested in people[7].

From 1876 to 1894 the two MacLeod sisters lived the Sturges Life, and until 189l these were in many ways fabulous years. Joe later mentioned that in 1888 she visited the drawing room of Buckingham Palace, where she curtsied to Queen Victoria[8]. Joe and Betty were both young, attractive, somewhat educated for the period in which they lived, with access to money. In 1886 portraits of the two were painted by Marie Robiquet in Paris. In later life Joe would be described as “not terribly good looking but still having a lovely, vivacious face and sky-blue eyes.”[9] She was always thin, and apparently somewhat delicate, suffering much of her life with indigestion.

It is ironic that although Betty was the sister with an eye for high society, it was not really her talent to mingle easily with strangers, to strike up new friendships. One senses some hesitancy in her socializing, perhaps over-dependence on the advice and management of others in making social arrangements. Joe, it can be seen, had a more expansive view of life. She had no social ambitions; but she was keenly interested in people, seeing in them brand new horizons. She had not only the forte of being able to quickly establish new friendships, but also the natural patience and care necessary to cultivate and make them lasting. Bundles of correspondence over her ninety-year span of life bear testimony to how she maintained sincere and loving bonds with friends all over the world. Frances Leggett wrote in *Late and Soon*:

Betty, the elder and married sister, the holder of the purse-strings, was the one who ruled (ostensibly), whose wishes were deferred to. But Joe’s purposefulness, combined with the facility for intimacy, more than restored the balance. Once from shipboard, Betty wrote: “Joe is radiant with her usual sweet nature. She is already in touch with others and chats and nods here and there, letting her light shine. I am a poor companion for strangers -- not in the least knowing how to approach or be approached.... It is a special talent, that of being reached by strangers....”[10]

Reached but not possessed. As a young woman, Joe could never be possessed by anyone. She is easily pictured as vibrant and fashionably-dressed. Certainly she would have drawn admiring male eyes. In fact, Alberta and Hollister Sturges used to ensconse themselves behind the living room sofa where they overheard several proposals of marriage “from someone or other of Aunt Joe’s acquaintance.” The fact that nothing ever came of these proposals was due in part to her sister’s watchful eye, but mostly to Joe’s restless nature. Joe regarded marriage as a threat to her freedom and independence.[11]

In Paris Joe did once become engaged, very briefly, to a young Andre Regnault with whose family she had lived in Passy. She broke off the engagement when his possessiveness became overwhelming. Frances Leggett wrote: “He would not trust her out of sight; he followed her to the coiffeur, he burst in on her at the dressmaker; she could not call her soul her own.”[12] Joe was thankful ever after to have permanent freedom from this possessive man. On the back of his mother’s photograph, which he gave to Joe, he had written: *A Miss MacLeod, la jeune fille*

que j'eusse choisie entre toutes, meaning that she was the woman he had chosen over all others. "You can't catch Josie," said Joe about the whole thing.[13]

There were many people, however, whose friendships, established during these years, became lifelong. Among these was Gerald Nobel. His devotion, primarily to Betty, and then to the family in general, lasted his lifetime. Whenever they stayed in Paris, they saw him, and he was always on hand at the train station to meet any member or close friend of the family who might be passing through. Frances Leggett wrote: "...Gerald was the *beau ideal* of a nineteenth-century gentleman -- with his courtesy, his formality, and his marvelous good looks. And his cultivation. One had always heard of his library as containing only such books as he had read himself!"[14]

Joe and Betty so resembled each other that once Gerald Nobel walked into a room, seeing, so he thought, Betty, who turned out to be Joe. "We resembled each other, you know," said Joe later, "and Gerald, thinking at first that I was my sister, saw his mistake and nearly fainted. I never cared for him so much after that." Gerald's own summation of Joe was, "*Une jeune fille charmante mais pour moi trop joyeuse*!" meaning, "She is a delightful young woman, but too rambunctious for me!"[15]

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[1]In 1874 New York City annexed a portion of Westchester County; in 1883 the Brooklyn Bridge was built; in 1898 the five boroughs of Manhattan, the Bronx, Brooklyn, Queens, and Staten Island, united to form New York City.

[2] Statistics are taken from Clifton Hood's stu dy, 722 Miles: Tbe Building of the Subways and How They Transformed New York (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995).

[3] Culme-Seymour Coll., November 27, 1938; May 14, 1941.

[4] Late and Soon, p. 19.

[5] Late and Soon, pp. 19-20.

[6] Letters SN II, #287, p. 647.

[7] Late and Soon, p. 239.

[8] Sturges Coll., Josephine Mac Leod to Daniels, September 29, 1916.

[9] Whitmarsh, 1988.

[10] Late and Soon, pp. 26-27.

[11] Late and Soon, pp. 11, 27-28.

[12] Late and Soon, p. 28.

[13] Late and Soon, p. 28.

[14] Late and Soon, p. 30.

[15] Late and Soon

TANTE

Though Joe did not choose to establish a husbandand-child relationship for herself, she often acted as Second Mother to Betty's children, Alberta and Hollister, and referred to them as "our children." They usually called her *Tante* or *Tantine* (*Aunt* or *Little Aunt*). She would chaperone them on long trips, see to it that they got to the dentist regularly, and make sure they were given top instructors in America and abroad. She also handled some of the hiring and firing of their nannies. According to Frances Leggett:

It was Betty who ... ordered the meals,... who arranged the flowers, who saw to the creature comforts of those about her (Joe had no idea of comfort); but it was the results that interested Betty, not the works. She would cast a proprietary eye from time to time over the children's education,... -- to see that they "got" their languages, for instance; and when it came to dressing them, it was her affair entirely. Joe was too preoccupied with serious matters, such as their belief in God or the character of their instructors, to bother about appearances. Besides which, Joe had no taste[1].

And apparently it was Betty who also had to cast an eye over Joe's wardrobe and see to it that her sister dressed well. Joe simply had no mind for such things[2]. And as for taking the children to the dentist and nursing them through their illnesses, Joe liked being "Mother."[3]

Later it would be Joe who would decide on behalf of the children that a change in schools -- or even *continents* -- was advisable. The children's education had to be broad and varied and many-hued to please the MacLeod sisters. Frances Leggett wrote:

[There was no continuity in the children's education, for] to plan ahead was seldom possible or (in Betty's and Joe's eyes) desirable. When so much was offered, such a variety of interest here, there, and everywhere, why not try all? A fine school in Geneva? Yes, but a better one in Paris, and Paris is so charming in the springtime.

To be on the lookout for each and every opportunity and to act instantly was the rule. Really it was wonderful for the children to have all this experience. How different indeed from the dull, unimaginative circles in which Betty and Joe had passed their childhoods. This was Life. This was Education.[4]

Joe also did not place too much value on college education. In later years when the question of Hollister's college career arose, it was Joe who gave the final convincing argument against it, and he was taken out of Princeton after his freshman year[5]. So it was Betty who ruled *ostensibly*.

Joe was practical and frugal even from her childhood days, and as an adult still remembered how she would, as a little girl, hide her pennies over the doorsill on cleaning day so they would not be swept away. "I don't like waste," she would tell others, sometimes quite pointedly, for their own good. "Even today if I see a match drop, I still pick it up!"[6] One imagines her sense of shock when one nanny refused to use a towel more than once. It was too much for Joe, and she immediately let the woman go.[7]

[1] Late and Soon, p. 26.
[2] Whitmarsh, 1983, 1988.
[3] Late and Soon, p. 26.
[4] Late and Soon, p. 32.
[5] Late and Soon, pp. 7-8, 161.
[6] Helen Kazantzakis, Nikos Kazantzakis, p. 353.
[7] Early Draft Late and Soon, p. 28.

IS THIS ALL THERE IS?

Joe loved people and she loved freedom. The Sturges years gave her plenty of both, but she began to feel the need for something more. While Betty was skillfully shaping out a social base for her family on two continents, Joe began searching for something beyond the glamour. In 1892 she persuaded Betty to go with her to a Christian Science lecture, and eventually they both took instructions in it from a Miss Andrews in New York[1]. Christian Science taught that one had only to "hold to the Truth," but to a practical person like Joe, this did not altogether satisfy. What *was* the Truth really? How *did* one recognize it? And just how did one actually go about *holding onto it*? What Joe received from her experience with Christian Science was perhaps some of the tremendous mental willpower she would carry with her all her life and an affinity for very simple, natural health cures. She always held Christian Science in high regard, saying in later years, "There is much [that is] true in it."[2]

About this time Joe also began a lifelong friendship with the works of American Transcendentalist Ralph Waldo Emerson, and throughout her life would give his books as little gifts to family and friends with the idea that she and they would have a "common thread of thought."[3]

For a person like Joe, who loved to learn and who was on the search for "something more to life," it was natural that she would be drawn to Buddhism. It is very likely that she read, and perhaps memorized in part, *The Light of Asia*, the famous poetic life of Buddha, written by Sir Edwin Arnold, which had just been published in 1879 and which sold between one-half and one million copies in the U.S. and Britain. She could also have heard the very popular Sir Edwin himself lecture in England or during an extensive tour he conducted in major cities in the Eastern United States, where it is said he "captivated his audiences and made Buddhism all the rage."[4] Though Joe became somewhat conversant in Buddhism, she had still not found what she was looking for.

Then one day, browsing in a bookstore, she came across a heavy book with the rather odd title: *The Bhagavad Gita: or the Lord's Lay*, translated by Mohini Chatterji[5]. Inside on the frontise page she must have immediately read that it provided "*commentary and notes, as well as references to the Christian Scriptures*" and that it was "*translated from the Sanskrit for the benefit of those in search of spiritual light***.**"[6] By her own account, Joe and Betty both began reading *The Bhagavad Gita* (or *The Song of God*) and "got it by heart."[7]

It is said that taking one step towards God brings God ten steps nearer. Joe and Betty began trying to meditate. The two sisters would sit quietly with their eyes closed in Betty's bedroom in their New York house, and sometimes a friend named Dora Roethlesberger would join them. During one of these sessions, Dora had an experience in which she saw "*a man dressed in white who broke a beautiful electric blue light" over the three women*. She told Joe and Betty that she would recognize his face if ever she saw it. Later she did.[8]

Joe's spontaneous attraction for Eastern thought was surely a response generated by her own inner, free, unselfish nature -- her own character. Frances Leggett wrote about her Aunt Joe: "Joe, though setting value on success ... was all for the real and earnest. Moreover, she was possessed of an insatiable curiosity for all that might be called *elemental* -- whether by this term is implied the attributes of the Deity or the simplest facts of human existence. How things were done enthralled her: cooking, housework, digging in the garden, having babies. It was not that she wanted to do these things herself. On the contrary.... But still it filled her with a kind of wonder to watch others doing them."[9]

Years later Joe's friend Sister Nivedita observed, "I ... see that you have got all your experiences of life through others."[10] And Joe once wrote about herself: "I live mostly in others. I expand with fresh ideas and culture."[11]

The winter of 1893 found Joe and Betty back in Chicago sitting by turns at the bedside of their seventy-year-old father as he lay dying in a Catholic hospital. As he had lived, so he died:

indomitable to the last. Joe later remembered a young member of the clergy -- perhaps the hospital chaplain -- coming to pay a visit and asking, “Sir, are you prepared for death?” “Before you were born, young man!” came the instant rejoinder.[12]

By this time Joe was reading Eastern philosophy in earnest. One night she was sitting by her father’s bed, reading as he lay, so she thought, asleep. Suddenly looking up, she saw that he was watching her. He asked her to read to him from her book, and after she had read a page or two he stopped her, saying, “That’s the finest sermon I ever heard.” She was very pleased and surprised.[13]

After her father’s death on March 20, 1893, Joe admitted being touched by the atmosphere of that hospital and said she would like to die in such a place “where the prayers of loving women would sustain” her and she would be cared for “by those consecrated to their vocation and not who thought only of their two hours off daily.”[14] It was a prophetic statement.

Nine weeks after Joe’s father died, Swami Vivekananda left India to journey to Chicago to represent Hinduism at the famed Parliament of Religions.

[1] Sturges Coll., to Hollister Sturges, August 31, 1902.
[2] Sturges Coll., to Hollister Sturges, August 31, 1902.
[3] Sturges Coll., to Jeanne Sturges, November 24, 1935; Culme-Seymour Coll., October 26, 1944.
[4] Carl T. Jackson, The Swami in America
[5] New Disc. 3
[6] Mohini M. Chatterji, translator, The Bhagavad Gita or the Lord’s Lay, (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1887).
[7] Rems.
[8] Early Draft Late and Soon.
[9] Late and Soon
[10] Letters SN I, #70
[11] Culme-Seymour Coll., November 27, 1938.
[12] Late and Soon
[13] Late and Soon
[14] Late and Soon

JOE HAS SPIRIT!

In the meantime, Joe and Betty had already entered the last phase of their Sturges years. William Sturges was a highly respected, resourceful business executive. At all times he was scrupulous in his dealings with others. But in the spring of 1891 he had suddenly found himself the victim of having placed too much trust in certain business associates. This had led to a series of very expensive and explosive lawsuits. For the next two years Betty and her family had anxiously waited, hoping the terrible business problems would somehow go away. It was during this period that Betty met Francis H. Leggett.

Francis H. Leggett was head of one of the largest importing and wholesale grocery houses in New York City. His wife had died in 1863 and his five-year-old son had died in 1868. Frank was now a sought-after widower, with a fine home and a neat, careful appearance. Reserved by nature, he had been given the nickname "Franklinberg" by friends.[1]

Frank had known William Sturges for years and liked him. He was also aware that the Sturges Touch was not always golden; that his fortunes had run down as well as up the scale more than once. Moreover, Frank knew that William Sturges was now involved deeply in what could be disaster to his business life. Nearing seventy years of age and in failing health, Sturges would have a very difficult time starting over now if he were to lose everything.

Frank first came to the Sturges household to call on Fanny Parsons, Betty's friend who was visiting from Chicago. But liking what he saw of the Sturges family, Frank became a frequent caller to Betty's drawing room even after Fanny Parsons returned to Chicago. And it is through Frank's eyes that one begins to really see Joe MacLeod and her family. In *Late and Soon* Frances Leggett vividly described Frank's spontaneous fascination with them:

[He] was drawn to them all, even to the children ... with their sunny dispositions and charming foreign manners.... Spontaneity! It was this that struck one most about them, this and their attachment to each other....

Here was no ordinary family. They seemed quite to delight in one another. They lived and moved in unison -- in which, as Frank would discover, was known as "the MacLeod Spirit" -- less a blood relationship ... than an attitude of mind. It implied being good humoured in any eventuality, accepting what came, turning the least agreeable of surprises into opportunity for further cheerfulness, even profit....

Joe had spirit! Her enthusiasm for persons and things elevated the commonplace onto a higher plane -- where everything was acclaimed as interesting and to be enjoyed. And those thrusts of hers into the Absolute -- they were arresting to one accustomed to more conservative, less conscious moral values. Joe ... was the more animated, the easier to know [of the two sisters]. One called her by her given name before one was on such terms with Betty; one laughed and wagged the tongue with Joe, even if it was Betty whom one had come to see.... It was all "such fun, such fun" (as Joe said) to be alive at all.[2]

And yet there were no games, no pastimes. According to Frances Leggett:

Betty and Joe did not approve of games. [By Joe especially] games of all kinds were held to be a waste of time (God's time, as Joe envisaged it). "What could be more senseless than trying for *hours* to do something with a ball?" The same went for indoor pursuits such as dominos.... The only exception was croquet at which Joe showed surprising skill.... What a pity that she yielded so seldom to frivolity, that in Joe's world of eternal values there was so little place for fun![3]

In the spring of 1894, when William Sturges' all-important testimony had to be given on the witness stand in a Chicago courtroom, the man found he could not remember what he had come to say. In a bare whisper he pleaded for a few more days, saying, "If only I could have until Monday, I could answer all...." Then he collapsed and was taken to a sanatorium.[4]

Betty Sturges now had to take the witness stand. On her testimony in court hung the precarious balance between her family's financial future and disaster. All she really had was the house on

Thirty-Fourth Street, and already the bank was pressing her about the mortgage. According to Frances Leggett: "... Something innately strong in her, something almost majestic, rose to meet the emergency. She was fighting for her own and she fought with a lion's courage. She had good business sense when there was occasion for it."[5] Betty's clear, unflagging testimony did not win the case but mitigated an earlier decision of the court. The experience also left her exhausted, and she went at once to be with her husband in the sanatorium.[6]

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[1] Late and Soon, p. 75.
[2] Late and Soon, pp. 77-78.
[3] Late and Soon, p. 207.
[4] Late and Soon, pp. 23-24.
[5] Late and Soon, p. 78.
[6]Late and Soon, pp. 78-79.

FRANK LEGGETT AND RIDGELY

In September of that year, 1894, Frank Leggett returned to New York City from a trip to Japan and invited Betty, Joe, and the children to visit him at his new home in Ulster County, New York, a place he called Ridgely.

Two years before, Frank had acquired 130 acres of farmland in the Hudson Valley, ninety-five miles north of New York City. The property was near the small, quiet village of Stone Ridge, settled, as its name implies, on a ridge between the valleys of two rivers flowing into the Hudson some ten miles away. Frances Leggett later recorded, "The site was chosen for its views and nothing then impeded the vistas of mountains -- to the north the blue Catskills..., to the south the rugged Shawan-gunks."[1]

There were only two houses already on the property: the Inn, built in the 1840s, and a cottage, subsequently enlarged and named the Little Cottage. Frank Leggett at once set in motion a program of building, which included the beautiful main house, Ridgely Manor, built for his own use as a country home.

At the time of the purchase, Frank Leggett had planned to establish a settlement named "Ridgely Park," (possibly inspired by the example of the famous Tuxedo Park -- though on a much smaller scale -- fifty miles to the south), with houses to rent for the summer to friends. For all the buildings, Frank, as was his way, firmly insisted on using only the best materials and the finest workmanship. As Frances Leggett later wrote, "Ridgely was made to last."[2] It is now almost certain that the architect he engaged to achieve his dream was Charles Coolidge Haight.[3]

Charles Coolidge Haight had already achieved the kind of reputation that earned him many invitations to compete for projects sponsored by prestigious institutions. Among his completed works were Yale University's Scientific School in Connecticut, and in New York City, a building used later by Trinity School at 139 West Ninety-first Street; Christ Church at Broadway and Seventy-first Street; and the New York Cancer Hospital on Central Park West, built 1885-1890, which was the first hospital devoted to cancer in the United States. Haight had also designed most of the buildings on the original (1860s) campus of Columbia College, and served on the planning commission during the initial stages of designing a new Morningside Heights campus when Columbia merged with Teachers College in 1892.[4]

By 1894, four buildings had been added to Frank Leggett's property at Ridgely. The main building, Ridgely Manor, was built as his residence. A cornerstone beneath the morning-room window is inscribed July 14, 1892.[5] Also built, were the Casino, a playhouse complete with bowling alleys and an adjoining grass tennis court, the Stables, with a five-room apartment on the second floor and a four-room apartment on the ground floor, and the ten-bedroom Big Cottage, built by the architect for his own use. Later generations called the Big Cottage "Fairfield" and "Clematis Cottage." All these, plus the Inn and the Little Cottage that had been on the three parcels of land completed the lovely estate of Ridgely.

Of all the buildings, Ridgely Manor was placed in a commanding position. It was, and still is, an imposing mansion of yellow clapboard with white columns, hipped roof, and towering chimneys. Inside are spacious rooms of dignified proportions, cream-colored woodwork, and fireplaces with colorful inlaid-tile hearths. The Hall, just beyond the entrance, was until 1942, the most lived-in room, with its formal panelling, white Ionic columns, and big fireplace with a Della Robbia cast above the mantel. In addition, there are a drawing room and library. The dining room contains massive sideboards, and its fireplace has a black marble mantel. There are two kitchens (one originally a butler's pantry). The house has nine bedrooms, seven bathrooms, and two half-baths, with two more bedrooms and a bathroom on the third floor.

Walking through the lovely Ridgely Manor, one notices how the light-filled rooms, though large, lead so naturally into one another. Architects consider Ridgely Manor a masterpiece in design and craftsmanship.

It has been said, but never confirmed, that the grounds were laid out by an associate of Frederick Law Olmstead, landscape architect, who superintended the planning and making of New York City's world-famous Central Park.[6] Olmstead, who was considered the "dean of American parks and town planning," also laid out the entire grounds for the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893, held in Chicago.[7]

In 1894, when Joe and Betty and the children first visited Ridgely, one travelled from New York City to Ulster County by various means. The journey began with a ferryboat from Forty-second Street to Weehawken, New Jersey, then a train by the West Shore railroad along the Hudson River to Kingston, New York, which took several hours. There another train had to be boarded for the little village of Binnewater. Finally there was a carriage ride of about four miles. Marie Louise Burke has described this last leg of the journey to Ridgely in *New Discoveries*. In Volume III, she writes:

[At Binnewater] the party was no doubt met by a surrey and spanking pair and driven the four miles to Ridgely Manor along a gently rolling country road, past apple orchards, corn and pumpkin fields, wooded hills, and occasional farm buildings. Most of these last were of the nineteenth century -- neat red barns and white houses scalloped along the eaves with wooden rickrack called Hudson River Bracketed; but here and there a small weathered stone house, dating back to pre-Revolutionary days, stood half hidden among protective elms and chestnuts. Half a mile beyond Stone Ridge, the small village through which the road passed, the horses turned into the avenue of Ridgely and trotted up to the Manor -- a graceful and welcoming house ... as dignified, substantial, and unassuming as its owner, Francis Leggett.[8]

Many years later Joe would recall this, their first visit to Ridgely, as described in *Late and Soon:* "Frank had been so proud and glad to have them see it.... Joe saw him again for a moment as he was, the gracious, courteous host, the owner of Ridgely and of so much besides; the dignified figure who had not yet given all. He it was who walked before her in the old rooms, he and her sister with her bright hair and elegant clothes and half-worldly-wise, half-naive air that so bewitched and eventually won him."[9]

After their visit of perhaps two weeks to Ridgely, Betty and Joe returned to New York City, the children having gone north to Dobbs Ferry, New York, where they were in school. Then Betty went to the sanatorium in Chicago to be with her husband. Writing to Frank on October 18, 1894, she stated: "I find all at peace here. My presence pathetically appreciated by all save the one for whom I am here. He has passed beyond the state of recognition."[10]

William Sturges died on November 12, 1894. A few days later Frank Leggett wrote to Betty, "If you need me at any time I will come." The Sturges life was over for the MacLeod sisters. Betty wrote in her diary for the new year, January 1, 1895: "To the Sage and the child the Superlative of Life's interest is in the present."[11] Joe, who *did* live in the present, without plans or expectations, did not know that her real life would begin before the month was out. But years later, surely in tribute to all that happened to her, she quoted Shakespeare, and declared: "'The readiness is all' shall be put on my tombstone if I ever have one!... I stumbled into a family that gave *freedom!*"[12]

[1] Late and Soon, p. 83.[2] Late and Soon, p. 83.
[3] Viscount Margesson, letter to author, June 14, 1994.
[4] Robert A. M. Stern, Gregory Gilmartin, and John Massen gale, New York 1900: Metro-politan Architecture and Urbanism 1890-1915, (New York: Rizzoli), pp. 80, 94, 368-70, 404-05.
[5] Late and Soon, p. 84. Current information on Ridgely Manor was kindly supplied by Vis count Margesson, grandson of Francis Leggett.
[6] Late and Soon, p. 83.
[7] Phil Patton, "The Great Chicago Fair," Smithsonian, June 1993, p. 40.
[8] New Disc. 5:109-10.[9] Late and Soon, p. 237.[10] Late and Soon, p. 91.[11] Late and Soon, p. 94.[12] Culme-Seymour Coll., February 28, 1939.

READINESS AND BIRTH (Part Two)

"He said something ... [and] instantly to me that was truth, and the second sentence he spoke was truth, and the third sentence was truth. And I listened to him for seven years and whatever he uttered was to me truth."

-- Josephine MacLeod, Reminiscences of Swami Vivekananda

(OCEAN OF TRUTH)

There is no indication that Josephine MacLeod had any foreknowledge that Tuesday, January 29, 1895 was going to be different from any other day in her life. However, in later years she stated her belief that what happened on this day had been preordained.[1] One month before, just the day after Christmas, she had turned thirty-six years old. She and Betty were now living in Dobbs Ferry on the east bank of the Hudson River with a Mrs. Davidson. Hollister and Alberta Sturges were still in school there, and the sisters frequently went downriver to New York City. They would lunch with friends, shop, attend a lecture or concert, or, in Betty's case, attend to business pertaining to her late husband's estate. Betty was now seeing Francis Leggett socially, and no doubt he sometimes joined them.

Over the next forty years or so, Joe recalled this day and the surrounding circumstances of it so many times that some contradictory bits of detail have cropped up in her published letters and reminiscences. But they are *bits*. The important fact is that on Tuesday, January 29, 1895, Josephine MacLeod's entire life changed, and changed so much that she forever after considered this day her spiritual birth -- her real birthday - and counted her age only from this day, when she "found her own soul."[2]

Culling the most reliable and reasonable statements from Josephine MacLeod's published reminiscences and letters, it happened in the following way: Joe and Betty received an invitation from their friend Dora Roethlesberger to have lunch at her place in New York City on Tuesday, January 29. When the sisters arrived at her home late that morning, they found a note from her, saying: "Do come to 54 West 33rd Street and hear the Swami Vivekananda, after which we will return to luncheon."[3] That address happened to be one block from 21 West Thirty-fourth Street, where they had lived with William Sturges, and which Betty still owned. Joe's reminiscences, written by her in the mid-1930s,[4] tell the complete story. She writes:

On the twenty-ninth of January 1895, I went with my sister to 54 West 33rd Street, New York, and heard the Swami Vivekananda in his sitting room where were assembled fifteen or twenty ladies and two or three gentlemen. The room was crowded. All the armchairs were taken, so I sat on the floor in the front row. Swami stood in the corner. He said something, the particular words of which I do not remember, but instantly to me that was truth, and the second sentence he spoke was truth, and the third sentence was truth. And I listened to him for seven years and whatever he uttered was to me truth. From that moment life had a different import. It was as if he made you realize that you were in eternity. It never altered. It never grew. It was like the sun that you will never forget once you have seen it.[5]

In another account of her first visit to Swami Vivekananda's classes, Joe described an experience which she had while he was speaking. Her recollection of the great number of people in the room cannot be right, since the swami's audience at this point was very small, but the subject matter she mentions may be correct. There is good evidence, according to Marie Louise Burke, that his early classes that winter, the first of which had

been given the day before, on Monday, January 28, were Discourses on Jnana Yoga. At the end of the Second Discourse, as published in the *Complete Works* the swami stated:

[The Gita] shows us that our battle for spirituality must be fought out in this life; so we must not flee from it but rather compel it to give us all that it holds. As the Gita typifies this struggle for higher things, it is highly poetical to lay the scene in a battlefield. Krishna in the guise of a charioteer to Arjuna ... urges him not to be sorrowful, not to fear death, since he knows he is immortal; that nothing which changes can be in the *real* nature of man. Through chapter after chapter, Krishna teaches the higher truths of philosophy and religion to Arjuna.[6]

Joe gave this account of what happened to her:

The subject was the Gita. More than one hundred persons were present; they were all scattered in the room. When Swamiji started speaking,... I lifted my eyes and saw with these very eyes (she pointed to her own eyes) Krishna himself standing there and preaching the Gita. That was my first wonderful vision. I stared and stared.... I saw only the figure, and all else vanished.[7]

Years later, when Joe met Nikos Kazantzakis, the famous Greek writer, she told him how she had first met Swami Vivekananda, "the fiery Hindu with the athletic body and the jet-black eyes." In his book *England* he recorded her story this way:

One day in New York I heard him preaching in his deep, melodious voice. He was explaining how human beings can cleanse themselves of their passions and feel that they are all brothers and so be saved. He believed that all the religions worship the same God, except that there are different faces, according to the times and the peoples. That was his message, and I listened to him carefully, weighing his every word. And when he'd finished, I got up and said: "I agree. I'll go with him!"[8]

In this account, it is possible that Joe was referring to a statement Swamiji made in his Fifth Discourse on Jnana Yoga, when he said: "Do not pity anyone. Look upon all as your equal; cleanse yourself of the primal sin of inequality. We are all equal and must not think, 'I am good and you are bad, and I am trying to reclaim you.' Equality is the sign of the free."[9]

In later years, Joe stated about her first visit to Swami Vivekananda's classes, "His first sentence made me know I had heard the Truth -- the truth that sets one free."[10] And on another occasion Joe said: "Somehow one was lifted *above* the body and time and space."[11]

Joe and Betty went regularly to Swamiji's classes, three times a week. It is known that at first his classes were held daily from eleven to one o'clock and sometimes later. Then this schedule was changed to the mornings and evenings of Monday, Wednesday, and Saturday.[12] Joe's reminiscences continue:

I heard him all that winter, three days a week, mornings at eleven o'clock. I never spoke to him, but as we were so regular in coming, two front seats were always kept for us in this sitting room of the Swamiji.

One day he turned and said, "Are you sisters?" "Yes," we answered. Then he said, "Do you come very far?" We said, "No, not very far -- about thirty miles up the Hudson." "So far? That is wonderful." These were the first words I ever spoke to him.[13]

Actually Dobbs Ferry, New York, was only twenty miles up the Hudson River, on the east bank, but it may have seemed like thirty miles to the sisters, for in 1895 commuter travel in New York state was not easy. In one account of their first visit to the swami, Joe stated that she and Betty "came to New York by the Hudson River."[14] This probably meant coming by the New York Central railway, south along the east bank of the Hudson River to the city. At that time, the New York Central was the only railway with entrance onto the island of Manhattan. The train crossed the Harlem River from the east.[15] The train depot was at Forty-second Street and Eleventh Avenue. The last stage of their journey to 54 West Thirty-third Street would probably have been in a private horse carriage over cobbled streets. It must have taken the sisters well over an hour each time they made the

trip, and this was the middle of winter, a winter that included a snow blizzard in early February.

[1] Culme-Serymour Coll., May 9, 1922.
[2] Culme-Serymour Coll., May 9, 1922.
[3] Culme-Serymour Coll, December 9, 1943.
[4] PB, December 1949, p. 494.
[5] Rems., p. 228.
[6] CW8:8.
[7] New Disc. 3:26.
[8] Nikos Kazantzakis, England, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1965), pp. 250-51.
[9] CW8:18.
[10] Culme-Seymour Coll., December 9, 1943.
[11] Culme-Seymour Coll, January 2, 1936.
[12] New Disc. 3:40
[13] Rems., p. 228.
[14] New Disc. 3:26.
[15] Statistics are taken from Clif ton Hood's study, 722 Miles, Tbe Building of the Subways and How Ibey Transformed New York. See note 19, Chap ter One, Part One.

THE READINESS IS ALL!

It has been a common experience of the swamis who have worked in Vedanta centers in the West that many people come to their advertised lectures and classes simply hoping to acquire some occult powers. Swami Vivekananda himself wrote in a letter about his New York classes of this period, saying: "Some Theosophists came to my classes in New York, but as soon as human beings *perceive* the glory of the Vedanta, all abracadabras fall off of themselves. This has been my uniform experience."[1] And Leon Landsberg, writing to another of Vivekananda's devotees a few days after he and the swami had taken up their second-floor lodgings on Thirty-third Street, stated: "We [have] had a number of callers in our new residence which seems to have become the Mecca not only of the devoted truth seekers, but also of all curiosity seekers who imagine the Swami can in one lesson impart to them the art to work miracles. Men are mostly children who want their toys."[2]

Joe MacLeod was not looking for toys. Of toys on two continents she had had enough. She was not looking for powers. The power and wealth of William Sturges had been right there one day and gone the next. She was not looking for love. She had been loved by the Frenchman whose "love" only made her feel suffocated. As her niece Frances Leggett stated, "Joe wanted only the real and the earnest[3]." The wonder which amazed Joe was that she had been able to recognize the real and the earnest when she saw it.

Once Joe said about her experience: "Meeting Swamiji changed my life in a twinkling! But I was ready -- the readiness is all."[4] "Swamis," she stated, "do not give the same thought to everybody; it depends on your evolution. If you are ready, when you are ready, the teacher comes. It's your readiness that calls him. So when Swamiji came to America, and we went to hear him on the 29th of January, 1895, having read the Gita, Betty and I seemed to be ready, because from that hour, life had another purpose, because it gave that strength that's within one -- not what is without."[5]

"After I met him," Joe once said, "I was never the same."[6]

In a lecture Vivekananda himself explained about how one finds truth. He stated: "I found Truth because I had it in my heart already. Do not deceive yourselves. Do not imagine you will find it in one creed or in another creed. It is within you. Your creed will not give it to you. You must give it to your creed. Men and priests give it various names.... Listen. You have it within yourself, this pearl of great price. That which exists is one. Listen. 'Thou art that!'"[7]

[1] CW8:346.
[2] New Disc. 3:38.
[3] Late and Soon, p. 26.
[4] Culme-Seymour Coll., July 2, 1941.
[5] MacLeod recording.
[6] V and W ...158, p. 61.
[7] Life II, p. 101.

FRANK AND THE NEW BUDDHA

Later in life Joe reminisced about the secrecy in which she and Betty had quietly enveloped their early visits to Swami Vivekananda that winter of 1895. "We never mentioned him to anybody, for to us he was holy," she wrote.[1] And in 1927, upon hearing that someone had been so moved by meeting and getting to know "the King" that they had not been able to express their feelings, she wrote to her sister Betty: "I quite understand not speaking of it for several days. It is always so with things that move us. Don't you recall how we *hid* Swamiji all that first few weeks -- even from Francey [Frank Leggett]?"[2]

As one's steps, words, and thoughts are hushed upon entering a holy sanctuary, so the sisters were hushed for a time. They had entered the realm of true spirituality. And for Joe, in this time of quiet came reflection on what she was experiencing in the swami's classes. For her, his talks were experiences and *sacred* ones. *She did not hear his lectures; she experienced him.* With reflection, her perspective altered, and she now saw in him much more than lecturer or teacher. Later she stated about this: "It seems as if all my life dated from that event. As if I'd fulfilled the mission I was born for -- recognition of the new Buddha."[3]

Joe's reminiscences continue:

We never spoke to [the swami], had nothing much to do with him; but during that spring we were dining one night with Mr. Francis H. Leggett, who later became my brotherin-law. "Yes, we can dine with you but we cannot spend the evening with you," we had told him. "Very well," he answered, "just dine with me."

When dinner was over, he said, "Where are you going this evening?" We told him we were going to a lecture; and he asked, "Mayn't I come?" We said, "Yes." He came, he listened; and when it was over, he went up to Swamiji, shook hands with him, and said, "Swami, when will you dine with me?" And it was he who introduced us to Swami socially.[4]

One point might be made about the evening Frank Leggett first met Swami Vivekananda. In a 1941 letter to her niece Frances Leggett, Joe recalled that the restaurant they had dined at with Frank was in the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel,[5] which at that time was located on Fifth Avenue, just half a block from Vivekananda's lodgings on Thirty-third Street. The Waldorf was a very elegant place, rising, as Marie Louise Burke points out in *New Discoveries* "a spectacular thirteen stories above the cobbled streets ... with shiny black carriages and hansom cabs at its Thirty-third Street entrance and the comings and goings of the fashionable shedding a certain luster over its surroundings."[6]

Frank Leggett, being conscientious about following *rules*, would certainly have been wearing formal tuxedo tails that evening, as the Waldorf was the first restaurant in the United States to require this type of formalwear of its male patrons.[7] Added to this information, we get a vivid picture of the whole evening through the recollection of a friend of Joe, to whom she once gave a rather lively account. The friend, Alwina von Keller, stated:

How well I remember the laughter in Joe's fine voice when she told me what Mr. Leggett answered [when they said they were going to a lecture]: "Well, girls, take me along. I'd like to hear that chap that makes you call on somebody in such a [hurry]." He certainly did not seem to fit in, this businessman of the world, but what could they do but comply with his wish? And so they took him there with them. And lo and behold, who walks up to the Swami with frank and hearty American enthusiasm after Vivekananda's chanting the melodious *santi* at the close of his talk but Mr. Leggett! He stretched out his hand to the Indian monk and said, "By my word, Sir, that was first rate!" And the young monk laughed and said, "I am glad you liked it, Sir." A light talk of perfect courtesy began between the two and ended with Mr. Leggett's asking, "Say, when will you dine with us? I am sure these two ladies are dying to see more of you and so am I, so when? What, not introduced?"[8]

Unfortunately the subject of Swamiji's "first rate" lecture that night was not later recalled. According to Frances Leggett: "Even Joe could not remember. Her great, most vivid

remembrance was the first time she heard the swami. She took no notes then nor any other time. It was *he* speaking; that was all that mattered."[9]

So Frank Leggett was the bold one who immediately felt enough at ease in the swami's presence to ask him out for dinner. And it was there, at that dinner, that she and Betty met Swami Vivekananda socially.[10] Frank also apparently began attending some of the swami's talks, and at one point commented, "The swami is the greatest man I know." When asked why, he immediately replied, "Because he has more common sense than anybody I know."[11]

Frances Leggett, the daughter of Frank Leggett, commented upon her father's relationship with the swami. Writing in *Late and Soon*, she stated: "For Betty and Joe to accept Vivekananda was not extraordinary. He was, so to speak, in the air for such as they: American women hungry for culture, forever going to lectures, trying each new thing as it appeared.... It was the order of the day. The Swami represented *the* thing they were seeking,... so that when [Dora Roethlesberger] said they must come ... to hear a new man lecture, they went as a matter of course.... But for Frank, such a friendship was unique. As man to man he recognized in the young monk someone he wanted immediately to know. So different as they were in background, in age, in purpose, there was a spiritual link between them. Frank, successful man of business, typical of western civilization of his day, middle-aged [55 years old], conservative; and Vivekananda, Hindu monk, young [32 years old], dynamic, dedicated to a life of service, of no possessions -- these two were friends."[12]

And what was the impact of this swami on Betty? Many years later she remarked to a group of young monks: "I have met two men of striking personality in my life: One was the German Kaiser, and the other was Swami Vivekananda!"[13]

Sri Ramakrishna 1881

Swami Vivekananda New York 1895

Portrait of Betty Sturges by Marie Robiquet, Paris 1886

Swami Vivekananda London 1896

The Casino at Ridgely.

The Inn at Ridgely. Sister Nivedita stayed here in retreat, fall 1899.

The Dining Room in Ridgely Manor.

The Drawing Room in Ridgely Manor.

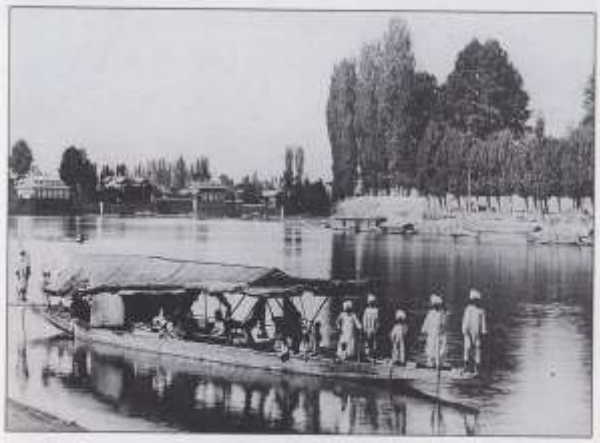
Portrait of Josephine MacLeod by Marie Robiquet, Paris, 1886.

Josephine MacLeod and Betty Sturges, ca. 1885.

David MacLeod.

William Sturges.

Kashmir, 1898. Left to right: Josephine MacLeod, Sara Bull, Swami Vivekananda, Sister Nivedita.



Houseboat in Kashmir, 1898. Left to right: Josephine MacLeod, Swami Vivekananda, Sara Bull, Sister Nivedita.

The Hall in Ridgely Manor.

The Stables at Ridgely, later used as garage and cottage for caretakers.

Kitty Margesson and her mother, Lady Isabel Margesson

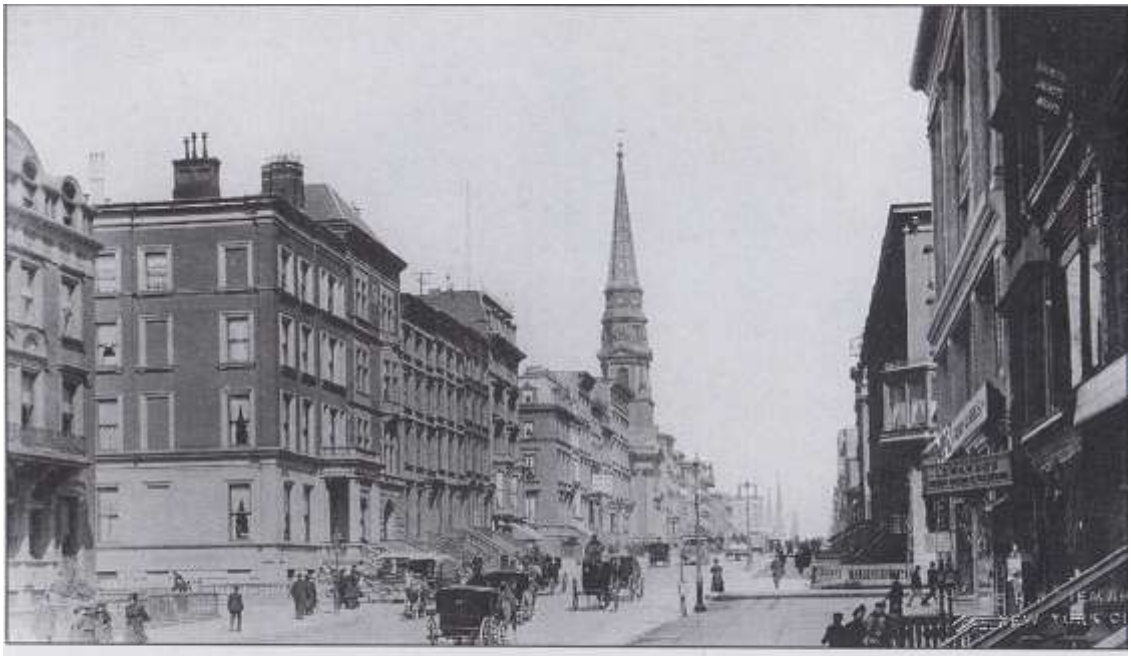
Belur Math courtyard. The lower storey of the building on the right was the original "little cottage" where Joe, Sara, and Nivedita lived in the spring of 1898. The upper storey was then added and the second building constructed. The original Shrine Room (now Old Shrine) is in right-hand corner of upper storey of the building on the left. Swamiji's room is in the upper storey of the right-hand building, facing the Ganges. On January 2, 1899, the monastic brotherhood took up occupancy of its permanent headquarters at Belur Math.

Ridgely Manor.

Ridgely Manor, looking towards the Catskill Mountains.

Sri Sarada Devi and Sister Nivedita, November 1898.

Sara Bull.



Collection of the New-York Historical Society.
New York City, ca. 1895. Fifth Avenue, north of 35th Street,
Vivekananda's neighborhood,
winter-to-spring 1895.

Frank Leggett and Anna Coates, Camp Percy, 1890.

There was one person with whom Joe MacLeod may have opened up and spoken in heartfelt confidence about Swami Vivekananda's greatness and about the revolution that was going on inside her, ceand that was Dora Roethlesberger, who also went regularly to Swamiji's classes. Joe's reminisnces state:

I always felt that after Vivekananda, Mrs. Roethlesberger was the most spiritual person I ever met. It was she who took us to him. Swamiji had a great place for her also. One day she and I went to the Swami and said, "Swami, will you tell us how to meditate?" He said, "Meditate on the word 'Om' for a week and come again and tell me." So after a week we went back and Mrs. Roethlesberger said, "I see a light." He said, "Good, keep on." [And I said,] "Oh, no, it is more like a glow at the heart." And he said to me, "Good, keep on." That is all he ever taught me. But we had been meditating before we ever met him, and we knew the Gita by heart. I think that prepared us for recognition of this tremendous life force which he was.[14]

(Joe later gave credit also to Emerson for getting her "ready to *recognize* Swamiji.")[15]

Actually, as will be discussed in a later chapter, this was *not* all the swami taught Joe about meditation, but it may well have been the only instruction given her for the first few years she knew him.

More important: Had Joe just received initiation at the hands of Swami Vivekananda? It has been said by many about him that his initiation was not ordinary; that he could initiate by touch, by glance, by mere wish. And he himself once stated that in the West he had initiated thousands by giving them the word OM.[16] Surely Joe's life will indicate whether or not she was a disciple of Swami Vivekananda, despite the fact that she would later emphatically insist that she was his friend, not his disciple.

It may have been at this point that Swami Vivekananda one day showed Joe and Dora a photograph of his own teacher, Sri Ramakrishna. When Dora saw it, she immediately recognized him as the man in white who had broken a blue electric light over her and Joe and Betty when they were meditating together. [See Chapter One, Part One.][17] Perhaps it was for this reason that Joe thought of Dora as spiritual and psychic.

It is typical of Josephine MacLeod that she saw greatness in others, and did not see that she herself was also developing her spirituality. As her life shows, she came to Swami Vivekananda already knowing that there was something *real* she needed to find and that she would not find it in worldly things. Four years later Swamiji himself was to make a very significant statement about Joe, saying that the difference between her and other devotees lay in the fact that others had matured after he met them, but that she had been fully developed before he ever saw her.[18]

Dora's vision shows that Joe, as well as Betty and Dora, had the blessings of Sri Ramakrishna before they came to Swami Vivekananda.

ⓘ[1] Culme-Seymour Coll., December 9, 1943.
[2] Culme-Seymour Coll, January 25, 1927.
[3] Culme-Seymour Coll, May 9, 1922.
[4] Rems., p. 229.[5] Friends Coll., 1941.[6] New Disc. 3:20.
[7] New York Guest Informant 1990
[8] Pravrajika Bhavaprana, "Josephine MacLeod," VK, March 1989, p. 101.
[9] Late and Soon, p. 96.[10] Culme-Seymour Coll., Decem ber 9, 1943
[11] Friends Coll., to Frances Leggett, 1941..[12] Late ad Soon, pp. 95-96.
[13] Sturges Coll., to Betty Leggett, November 26, 1916.[14] Rems., pp. 228-29.
[15] Sturges Coll., to Jeanne Stur ges, November 24, 1935..
[16] CW5:376.
[17] Early Draft Late and Soon, p. 21.
[18] Letters SN I, #51, p. 169.

THE RIGHT SORT OF PEOPLE

For Swami Vivekananda, the year 1895 was to be one of the most important in terms of his work in the West. During this year he would meet many of what were to become his key Western disciples and devotees. These were to include several monastic disciples, some devotees who would help him organize Societies and spread the message of Vedanta, and a number who would eventually serve him in India.

In addition, the early winter-into-spring work that Swamiji did in his headquarters at 54 West Thirty-third Street was in one sense his first *grounded* American work -- work fashioned by his own hand in the way in which he seems to have truly wanted to work: independent of others, consistent through and through with the divine principles in which he himself lived and moved continually, and given fully and freely to those earnest seekers of God who began coming by ones and twos and who eventually came by the dozens.

He himself was also now leading an ideal lifestyle: He was spreading his Master's message to those who sought it, and he was also living the private life of a monastic. Having at first used the lodgings only for his classes, with Leon Landsberg living there full-time, the swami had boarded with Dr. and Mrs. Egbert Guernsey at 528 Fifth Avenue. But soon after classes started, he had joined Landsberg in the apartment full-time and had begun living a simple rice-and-lentils existence that had been impossible when he depended upon others for his living arrangements. He was now free and happy as a letter to Sara Bull, dated February 14, 1895, shows: "Between Landsberg and me," he wrote, "we cook some rice and lentils or barley and quietly eat it, and write something or read or receive visits from poor people who want to learn something, and thus I feel I am more a sannyasin now than I ever was in America."[1]

So though Swamiji had been warned by well-meaning friends that the "right sort of people" would not come to his humble lodgings, come they had. And the right sort, by his definition, had to include Josephine MacLeod, Betty Sturges, and Frank Leggett. In a letter written by Sara Bull to a friend on April 16, 1895, she summed up the success of Swamiji's work that winter, stating: "His classes in New York were admirable. He worked continually and faithfully -- his lectures requiring on his part reading and careful thought.... It has served to call together earnest people among those who come to him, and I hope that a center of work for him in this country may be the permanent result of it all."[2]

As Swami Vivekananda himself wrote to Sara Bull on April l2, 1895: "The only 'right sort of people' are those whom the Lord sends.... They alone can and will help me.... As for the rest, Lord help them in a mass and save me from them."[3]

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[1] CW' 6:30 0.
[2] Friends Coll., to Mary Hale, April 16, 1895.
[3] CW 6:302-03. This letter is incorrectly dated in cw; April 11, 1895.

(LIFE AND FUN) (THE FUN BEGINS) (Part One)

"When the book of life begins to open, then the fun begins."
-- *Swami Vivekananda.* Reminiscences of Swami Vivekananda,
by Josephine MacLeod.

By April of 1895 Swami Vivekananda had been working steadily for over five months giving classes, lectures, and interviews, and he was exhausted. Moreover, his living and working conditions were undergoing a period of adjustment just now. His disciple-roommate, Leon Landsberg, had had some recent fits of temper with the swami, ostensibly over their living set-up, and Elizabeth Hamlen, a devotee engaged by Sara Bull to help Swamiji with routine paperwork, was pressing him to move his headquarters to what she considered a more suitable location[1].

Swami Vivekananda at this point was considering means for resolving the unpleasant situation with Leon Landsberg and Elizabeth Hamlen by moving in with a Dr. Moore and his wife and letting Elizabeth look for a new classroom[2]. Everything *seemed* settled.

Francis Leggett, Betty, and Joe were not yet closely connected with the swami's work. It is doubtful that at this early point in their relationship with him they were even aware of these behind-the-scenes problems that he was trying to resolve. So it is interesting that they displayed at this time what was to be perhaps the hallmark of their relationship with him: sensing his need for rest, and joyfully providing for it. Actually it was Frank Leggett who invited Swamiji to visit Ridgely for the Easter holidays. But one suspects that the gallant Frank Leggett would certainly have secured pre-approval from the two sisters, especially Betty. So in a sense this invitation was from the three of them. Hollister and Alberta Sturges were also invited. To be noted is the fact that Swamiji readily accepted the invitation, for it is known from a letter Sara Bull wrote to a friend that he also had the option of taking rest with friends of hers at their place in Janesville, New York.[3]

By contrast, there were students of the swami who looked upon him and his classwork as inseparable, and hearing that he was going to the country for an outing, some of them protested. Laura Glenn (later, Sister Devamata), who was attending his classes of this period, described some of the students as being "relentless and unwilling to lose a single opportunity of hearing him; thus giving him no respite."[4] Joe's reminiscences confirm this fact, stating:

The Swami came to Ridgely Manor, Mr. Leggett's place in the Catskill Mountains, and spent some days there. At the time some of the students said, "But, Swamiji, you can't go. The classes are going on." Swami turned with great dignity and answered: "Are they my classes? Yes, I will go." And he did.[5]

But not without a little mix-up caused by Joe, according to a letter Swami Vivekananda wrote to Frank Leggett on April 10, from New York. He began by expressing his delight at the invitation to take rest at Ridgely. Then he explained that he would have to delay his visit there because of a class scheduled for the day of departure:

As I was given to understand by Miss MacLeod that that class could be postponed, I was only too glad at the prospect of joining the company tomorrow. But I find that Miss MacLeod was mistaken and Miss Andrews came to tell me that she could not by any means stop the class tomorrow or even give notice to the members, who are about 50 or 60 in number.

Swamiji then assured Frank that he would be able to come any day later in the week.[6]

It has been said about Joe MacLeod that often her enthusiasm would get her into trouble -- others not always sharing that enthusiasm.[7] It is possible that it had been Joe who had arranged for the swami's class to be held at this Miss Andrews' home, and it may be that she was the same Miss Andrews who had given instruction to Joe in Christian Science. This might explain why Joe thought she could speak on behalf of Miss Andrews, and one

imagines Joe cheerfully assuring the swami that it should be no problem at all for Miss Andrews to just postpone that class to some other time!

As Frances Leggett stated about Joe: "*How things were done enthralled her;... it was not that she wanted to do them herself*."[8] It would not be Joe who would have to handle the actual postponing of the class. Moreover, since telephones were still rare in 1895, all postponement notices would have to have been done by hand. So all did not share Joe's enthusiasm.

Thus it was that on Saturday, April 13, the day before Easter, Swami Vivekananda suddenly announced to Elizabeth Hamlen that he would definitely *not be moving* his headquarters and that he *would be gone* for some days. Then he left, not telling her or Leon Landsberg where he was going. This trip was to be the first of three he would make to Francis Leggett's spacious estate in the Hudson River valley.

Many years later, Joe would look back on this first visit of Swami Vivekananda to Ridgely and would see him again as he walked majestically through the rooms, a young, vital man, not yet nationally recognized in India as a great spiritual hero. It must have been a few days after his arrival that he suddenly turned to her to say: "I must leave today. It isn't that I want to, but I must." "Why?" she had asked him, and he had replied, "Because I haven't any clean linen [*probably meaning shirts and detachable collars and cuffs for shirts*]." And she, of course, had gone right to Frank and explained, and Frank had supplied Swamiji with the things he needed[9]. This incident shows that Swamiji had begun to depend on Joe MacLeod; had begun to confide to her his needs. Might it not have been more the impulse of most guests to go to the host in such a situation? It was very important in the relationship Swami Vivekananda was establishing with Joe that he depend on her, confide in her, show that he trusted her.

According to a letter Frank Leggett wrote to a friend at this time, Vivekananda was actually ill the first few days of his visit[10]. However, there is ample evidence that he quickly recovered. This evidence has been recorded by Marie Louise Burke in *New Discoveries*, Volume III, as follows:

One day Joe opened the door of Frank Leggett's study, thinking it was unoccupied, and got a fleeting glimpse of Frank Leggett flying through the air and landing with a crash on the floor, and of Swamiji lying on his back, his feet aloft, trouser legs fallen to his knees. "This is a man's drawing room! Why did you not knock?" he said to her. Then after a pause, he laughed and said: "Come, Joe. Let us pick up what is left of Francis." Swamiji had apparently been balancing Frank on his feet, and because his bare legs were showing he had instantly sent his host flying and had jumped up, all in one motion.

In another version of the same incident (or another incident altogether), Joe and Betty came upon Swami Vivekananda and Frank in the Casino [playhouse] doing acrobatics. When they caught the two women watching them, they were outraged and sent them away. Later Joe disdainfully remarked, "They were making peacocks of themselves."[11]

Betty's reaction to seeing "Franklinberg" do acrobatics is not recorded.

On another occasion, hearing peals of laughter from inside Swami Vivekananda's bedroom, Hollister Sturges later asked him to whom he had been talking. "I was alone in meditation," Swamiji said. Hollister then asked, "But what was all that laughter about?" The swami thought for a moment, then replied, "Oh, God is so funny!"[12]

In a letter Vivekananda was to write much later to Francis Leggett, he told him, "It is a funny world, and the funniest chap you ever saw is He -- the Beloved Infinite!"[13] And in later life, Hollister once said to one of his little sons, "... I know there is a God because Swamiji told me so."[14]

It is difficult to imagine that anyone would not have been duly impressed with Swami Vivekananda now, after being with him at Ridgely. Here was a young monk who thought God was funny, and who did acrobatics. He laughed and was daring and had fun. He was also a good sport about being seen with bare legs. After their trip together, Frank sent Vivekananda a box of cigars, and received from him an affectionate note, saying: "Many

thanks for your kind present. The cigars are indeed delicious and a hundred times so as coming from you."[15]

Joe MacLeod's reminiscences continue:

While [Swamiji was at Ridgely Manor] he met my sister's children who were then twelve and fourteen years old [*actually, Hollister was fifteen; Alberta was seventeen*]. But when we came down to New York and the classes began again, he did not seem to remember them, and they, very much surprised, said, "Swami doesn't remember us." We said to them, "Wait until the class is over." While he was lecturing, he was always completely absorbed in what he was talking about. When he was through speaking, he came up and said, "Well, children, how nice to see you again," showing he did remember them. They were very happy.[16]

After their visit to Ridgely, Joe and Betty sometimes took Alberta and Hollister to Swamiji's Saturday morning classes, and Alberta later recalled her own reaction the first time she was taken there. Her father's death was still fresh, a great weight to carry, yet she felt strangely comforted in simple anticipation of what Aunt Joe's enthusiasm had prepared her for: Swamiji's powerful and comforting words. She later recalled that he said: "Religion is the knowledge of transcendental faith through the transcendental faculties of man. Transcend the limitations of the senses. Learn to seek beauty in variety (difference). Brotherhood of enemies, then brotherhood of friends."[17]

As for Joe, she was now truly alive, living for and giving her life to something higher, and it seemed to her that she had not *lived* until she came to Swami Vivekananda, that everything had begun with him. Her mind was now immersed day and night in thoughts of Vivekananda and Vedanta. In later life she would recall again and again the tremendous transformation that had come to her life, and she never forgot the things he said to her. In published reminiscences she states:

His power lay, perhaps, in the courage he gave others. He did not ever seem to be conscious of himself at all. It was the other man who interested him. "When the book of life begins to open, then the fun begins," he would say. He used to make us realize there was nothing secular in life; it was all holy. "Always remember, you are incidentally an American and a woman, but always a child of God. Tell yourself day and night who you are. Never forget it." That is what he used to tell us. His presence, you see, was dynamic. You cannot pass that power on unless you have it, just as you cannot give money away unless you have it. You may imagine it, but you cannot do it.[18]

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[1] New Disc. 3:70-71.
[2] New Disc, p. 72.
[3] Friends Coll., Sara Bull to Mary Hale, April 16, 1895.
[4] Sister Devamata, "Memories of India and Indians, PB, April 1932, p. 191.
[5] Rems., p. 229.
[6] CW8:334.
[7] Whitmarsh, 1988.
[8] Late and Soon, p. 26.
[9] Late and Soon, p. 237.
[10] New Disc. 3:78.
[11] New Disc, p. 79.
[12] New Disc, p. 80.
[13] Letters SV, p. 297.
[14] New Disc. 3:80.
[15] New Disc, p. 81.
[16] Rems., pp. 229-30.
[17] Late and Soon, p. 95.
[18] Rems., p. 229.

SAMADHI AT CAMP PERCY

In April Joe and Betty were staying with Francis Leggett in his large apartment at the Renaissance in New York City, and it was there one evening that Betty came running to tell Joe that Frank had just proposed marriage to her. Immediately after this, business matters with her late husband's estate took Betty to Chicago with a stop in Cincinnati to visit her cousins, the Burtons. From there she wrote to Frank: "... I have secured the necessary chaperone! -- and anything but a dull one -- quite in our Swami atmosphere. Are you to depend upon him?"[1]

The chaperone would be her cousin Georgia (Georgie) Spence, and the occasion would be a trip to Camp Percy, Francis Leggett's fishing cabin in the White Mountains of New Hampshire. Joe, of course, was also invited to Camp Percy, and her record continues:

In June of that year [1895] Swami went up to Camp Percy, Christine Lake, New Hampshire to be the guest of Mr. Leggett at his fishing camp. We also went. There my sister's engagement to Mr. Leggett was announced, and Swami was invited to go abroad [to Paris] and be the witness at the wedding. While he was at the Camp, Swami would go out under those beautiful white birch trees and meditate for hours. Without telling us anything about it he made two beautiful birch bark books, written in Sanskrit and English, which he gave to my sister and me.[2]

Katherine Whitmarsh, great-niece of Frank Leggett and daughter of Theodore Whitmarsh, wrote an article on Camp Percy, where she and her family had spent many summers. Describing the lake and their journeys there, she wrote:

Camp Percy ... with its clear, serene lake and its heavy forested mountains, is, in my opinion, one of the most beautiful natural settings to be seen anywhere in the world. To get to the camp they left New York by train in the evening, arriving the next morning in Portland, Maine, where the station had a wonderful restaurant serving good New England food. From there they travelled another four hours by train to the village of Percy on the Grand Trunk Railway... From the train stop one could go by horse and wagon or on foot up a steep and rocky path to the lake, a journey requiring about twenty minutes. I still remember the steepness and length of that path! But it was well worth the climb when one saw suddenly, through the woods, Lake Christine sparkling invitingly. The lake is a mile and a half long, and ... clear and beautiful, nestling among the mountains whose slopes, covered with pines, white birch and other trees, come right down to the shore....

The camps or lodges were located at one end of the lake overlooking a small bay, and visitors were rowed to their destinations.[3]

Frank Leggett and his party left New York on June 4, 1895, and according to the Log Book arrived at White Birch Lodge at one o'clock the afternoon of June 6. On the day of his departure, Vivekananda signed:

Swami Vivekananda

India, Heathen Hindu [4]

There, according to *The Life*, he rested for nearly two weeks, reading the Gita and, as previously mentioned, meditating alone for hours in the silence of leafy birch and maple woods.[5] On June 7 he wrote to Sara Bull: "This is one of the most beautiful spots I have ever seen. Imagine a lake, surrounded with hills covered with a huge forest, with nobody but ourselves. So lovely, so quiet, so restful! And you may imagine how glad I am to be here after the bustle of cities. It gives me a new lease [on] life to be here.... I will meditate by the hour there and be all alone to myself. The very idea is ennobling."[6]

White Birch Lodge still stands. At that time it consisted of a living room, a dining room, with a loft reached by a ladder, and two bedrooms. There was a kitchen in a separate building and rooms for servants. Apparently -- though it is hard to understand how -- there was enough room for the five adults, but about Betty's wardrobe, Frances Leggett wrote in *Late and Soon*:

"Unfortunately there was nowhere to hang [Betty's] gowns when they finally arrived; it took a day to get them there and then to drag them up the Carry and row them laboriously to the lodge's little wharf. And the pretty flounces were forever trailing in the water and sweeping the bare boards of the porch,..."[7]

It was here at Camp Percy that Frank and Betty announced their engagement to marry in Paris in September. Vivekananda was to be a witness. Plans had already been made for Betty and Joe to travel to France in July to buy Betty's trousseau (wedding dress and other clothing) and for Frank and Swamiji to sail in August. There must have been a pervasive feeling of well-being and joy and hope. Vivekananda's letters written from or about Camp Percy, reflect a high mood of general happiness. Frank was in love; Betty was dressed beautifully, pleasing to the man she loved; Georgie, presumably, was being "anything but dull"; Joe was happy because Swamiji was there; and he? One morning he entered into *nirvikalpa samadhi*, the highest transcendental state of consciousness in which one is totally absorbed in the Absolute -- or Brahman. Joe later recounted the incident, and her words have been recorded by Marie Louise Burke in *New Discoveries*, Volume III, as follows:

One morning before breakfast Swamiji came out from his room with a Sanskrit Gita in his hand. I was behind him. Seeing me, he said, "Joe, I am going to sit under that pine (pointing to a nearby pine) and read the *Bhagavad Gita*. See that the breakfast is sumptuous today." Half an hour later I went over to the pine tree and saw Swamiji sitting there motionless. The Gita had fallen from his hand and the front of his robe was wet with tears.

I went nearer and saw that his breathing had stopped altogether. I trembled in fear -- Swamiji must be dead. I did not shout, but ran to Francis Leggett and told him, "Come quick, Swami Vivekananda has left us." My sister ran to the spot with loud cries and my [future] brother-in-law also came with tears in his eyes. By now seven or eight minutes had passed. Swamiji was still in the same position. But [Frank] said, "He is in a trance; I will shake him out of it." I stopped him, shouting, "Never do that!" I remembered that Swamiji had said once that when he would be in deep meditation one should not touch him. Another five minutes or so passed, then we saw the signs of breathing. His eyes had been half closed; now slowly they opened. And then Swamiji, as if soliloquising, said, "Who am I, where am I?" Thrice he spoke like that, and then, wide awake, he saw us, was very much embarrassed, stood up, and said, "I am sorry to have frightened you all. But I have this state of consciousness now and then. I shall not leave my body in your country. Betty, I am hungry, let's hurry."[8]

A letter written by Swami Vivekananda to Alberta a few weeks after his Camp Percy trip gives a picture of his days there. He wrote:

We had such [a] jolly good time up there at Percy with Mr. Leggett -- isn't he a saint?... We had a good deal of rowing at Percy and I learnt a point or two in rowing. Aunt Joe Joe had to pay for her sweetness, for the flies and mosquitoes would not leave her for a moment. They rather gave me a wide berth, I think, because they were very orthodox sabbatarian flies and would not touch a heathen. Again, I think, I used to sing a good deal at Percy, and that must have frightened them away. We had such fine birch trees. I got up an idea of making books out of the bark as used to be done in ancient times in our country, and wrote Sanskrit verses for your mother and aunt[9].

One witness to Swamiji's rowing was Max Kaufman, a young boy whose father owned one of the camps at the lake. In 1942 he still remembered Swamiji and the Leggett party, saying:

I remember well their all coming up that summer. White Birch must have been full up. I don't see how they all got in. I remember Miss MacLeod -- ... And Swami! I remember him very well. I shall always remember his monk's habit. I had never seen a monk before. I kept wondering, boy as I was, what he wore under it. I kept on wondering and then one day he was rowing in the boat and he missed his stroke and nearly capsized and -- at last I knew! He was a good sport, falling backwards and hitting his head on the side, but he only laughed.[10]

[1] Late and Soon, p. 97.[2] Rems., p. 230.
[3] Katherine Whitmarsh, "Swami Vi\·ekananda at Camp Percy," PB, March 1986, p. 136.
[4] Late and Soon, p. 277.[5] Life II, p. 20.[6] CW6:309.[7] Late and Soon, p. 277.
[8] New Disc. 3:106.[9] CW6:313-14.[10] Late and Soon, p. 276.

INSPIRED TALKS: THE MYSTERY

Frank Leggett and his party stayed at Camp Percy for twelve days, and on Tuesday, June 18, Swami Vivekananda left by train for Thousand Island Park on the St. Lawrence River in upper New York State where he was to spend seven weeks in retreat with any of his students who were willing to make the three hundred-mile journey. The previous April he had written to Sara Bull about it, saying: "There is a cottage belonging to Miss Dutcher, one of my students, and a few of us will be there in rest and peace and seclusion. I want to manufacture a few 'Yogis' out of the materials of the classes,..."[1]

One wonders what thoughts and feelings lay deep within Joe MacLeod as she watched Swami Vivekananda depart for Thousand Island Park, knowing what he had said of those who would join him there, knowing that he would give these devotees freely all that he possessed, as was his nature with those who were sincere. She had undoubtedly heard him say that those students who were willing to put aside all other interests and devote themselves to studying Vedanta, travelling more than three hundred miles to a suitable spot, were the ones really in earnest, and that he would recognize them as disciples.[2] And Joe was not to be a part of that. What did she feel? We know only what she said about it (remembering that she wrote her reminiscences several decades later): She states:

[After our stay at Camp Percy] when my sister and I went to Paris to buy her trousseau, Swami went to Thousand Island Park and for six [*actually seven*] weeks gave those wonderful talks called *Inspired Talks*, which to me are the most beautiful words that were written, because they were given to a group of intimate disciples. *They* were disciples, whereas I was never anything but a friend. But that quality that he gave them! Nothing I think revealed his heart as those days did.[3]

Vivekananda's days at Thousand Island are considered one of the most important periods of his work in the West. It was at Thousand Island Park that he met Christine Greenstidle, who had heard him lecture in Detroit in February and March of 1894, and who had travelled from Detroit with her friend Mary Funke to be with the swami. She would later serve his educational work for women in India. It was at Thousand Island Park that he initiated several who had come, giving monastic vows to some; it was there that his talks and utterances were so deftly recorded by the dedicated Ellen Waldo (later published as *Inspired Talks*); and it was there that he wrote his famous poem, "The Song of the Sannyasin." It was also at Thousand Island Park that the swami again plunged into *nirvikalpa samadhi*. Of these seven weeks Vivekananda himself later stated, "I was at my best at Thousand Islands."[4]

Joe's reminiscences tell us that she had no part in this important time in his life with his disciples. However, she did later play an important role in the publishing of various editions of *Inspired Talks*, including the American edition in 1939, and the German and French editions.[5] Moreover, it appears that Joe was even behind the *taking* of the notes that became *Inspired Talks*. About this there is a tradition and also a mystery. Perhaps the two are connected.

Tradition has it that because Joe could not attend the Thousand Island Park retreat, she asked Ellen Waldo to take notes for her of what went on.[6] Later, in 1907, Ellen Waldo read those notes to her friend and fellow devotee Laura Glenn (later, Sister Devamata), who told her it would be criminal to keep them to herself. Ellen Waldo then turned them over to Sister Devamata, who edited them and saw to it that they were published in India in 1908 as *Inspired Talks*.[7]

But what happened to the notes Joe had asked for? This was answered by Swami Atmaghanananda in a 1963 article in which he described another set of notes taken at Thousand Island Park during Swami Vivekananda's retreat weeks there and kept by Joe MacLeod until her death. This extant set contains forty-nine sheets of an ordinary writing pad, on the cover of which is written: Notes from Talks by Vivekankanda (sic) copied for Miss McLeod (sic). Swami Atmaghanananda wrote:

The forty-nine pages of notes are a fragmentary record of what Swami Vivekananda said in his class talks at Thousand Island Park, New York, during July and the first week of August 1895. The manuscript is in the handwriting of a woman, perhaps past middle age, and appears to have been copied, word for word (including spelling mistakes) from an original set of notes made during Swamiji's talks by a new student not very familiar with Vedantic terminology. Miss MacLeod ... said that the person who made [the] copy had not been present at Thousand Island Park. As to the original note-taker's identity, none of the list of known disciples who were present satisfies the necessary conditions, except possibly the hostess, Miss Dutcher herself.

...In the eighteen pages covering the entries from July 2 to July 10 occurs much matter not found in Miss S. Ellen Waldo's fuller record extending from June 19 to August 6, published as *Inspired Talks* in 1908. At the same time, the subject matter of each of these entries corresponds with that of the identical dates in this latter work. The remainder of [the] manuscript, consisting of thirty-one pages, contains scattered quotations from more than half the days from July 11 through August 6 (the last day Swamiji taught).... Of primary interest here are several striking variants from the published text of his talks, undoubtedly derived from Miss Waldo's notes before they were edited for publication.[8]

Apparently the "new student" who took the original notes tried to take her or his own notes from July 2 to 10, then began to copy Ellen Waldo's expert notes. A suggestion has also been made that the note-taker was at the Park only on those dates and later borrowed Ellen Waldo's notes to copy.[9]

Another possibility offered as a solution to the *Notes for Joe* question is hereby suggested. Let us say that Ellen Waldo did agree to take notes for Joe in her absence. Perhaps she had no idea what to expect of the retreat, except that it would be wonderful. The swami could have been planning a seven-week vow of silence. Once she got there, however, and had to immediately dive into taking notes for Joe, she realized that they would be too precious to let go of. Ellen Waldo then asked another devotee to take notes for Joe so that she could keep her own notes. That devotee carried on from July 2 to 10, then appealed to Ellen Waldo to simply make available for copying her own expert notes, beginning July 11. This person then wanted to keep the notes for herself or himself, just as Ellen Waldo had. So then the offer was made to Joe MacLeod, when next they met in New York, to let this second set of notes be copied, and Joe asked someone to do this (*"someone who had not been at Thousand Island Park"*), and these notes, with their striking variants from the published *Inspired Talks* remained with her til her death.

The suggestion is also offered that the student who made the notes at Thousand Island could have been "unfamiliar with Vedantic terminology" without necessarily being a *new* student. One must remember that in 1895 Vedanta literature was not abundant as it is now. Many devotees became devotees through *hearing* lectures and classes alone, and as many modern students must admit, it takes both seeing and hearing Vedanta terms to become familiar enough with them to spell them correctly and recognize them in print.

Ruth Ellis, who was at Thousand Island from the beginning of the classes, having travelled there with Ellen Waldo, was a New York student and she was known to Joe MacLeod. Although she worked for a newspaper, she did not spell well, as evidenced by a lengthy letter she wrote which has been published in *New Discoveries*, Volume III[10]. It may well have been Ruth Ellis who kindly took the notes, but the identity of the person who copied the notes for Joe remains a mystery.

Ellen Waldo had taken notes of Swamiji's classes on jnana yoga in the spring of 1895 for her own use; and she had become so proficient that once at Thousand Island Park, when he heard her reading her notes of his classes for some latecomers, he remarked: "How could you have caught my thought and words so perfectly? It was as if I heard myself speaking[11]." Later, in December of 1895, Swami Vivekananda, having now witnessed Ellen Waldo's expertise as a stenographer, was to begin dictating to her part of the contents of his book, *Raja Yoga*.

If, as the tradition states, Joe MacLeod did ask Ellen Waldo to take notes for her, it may be regarded as the first in a series of occasions in Joe's life in which she was to be not the worker

but rather *the force behind another worker in Swami Vivekananda's cause*. The swami would one day say to Joe very sternly, "You have never been a worker, therefore your judgment is of little value in regard to workers[12]." Joe lived, as she herself said, through others, becoming at times a life force for others, setting them to great tasks. Both *Inspired Talks* and *Raja Yoga* should be regarded in this light, though in neither case was Joe consciously behind the work.

In her reminiscences about these disciples of Swamiji at Thousand Island Park, Joe expressed only detachment and happiness in the happiness and good fortune of others. "*They were disciples, whereas I was never anything but a friend. But that quality that he gave them!*" Joe seems to have been blessed with freedom by Swami Vivekananda, and out of that freedom came detachment. She often said that one can only give what one has.[13]

On July 7, Swami Vivekananda wrote to Frank Leggett telling him that he had received two beautiful letters and two pretty birch bark books from Joe and Betty. "I have filled them with Sanskrit texts and translations," he said, indicating that he had mailed the books back to the sisters. Then he told Frank of invitations (from E. T. Sturdy and Henrietta Muller) to visit them in London, adding that he did not want to miss the opportunity to work there. "Your invitation [to Paris] coupled with the London one is, I know, a divine call for further work," he told Frank,[]14 and made plans to go to London the day after the wedding. Writing to E. T. Sturdy, the swami stated: "I can stay only a few weeks in London. But if the Lord wills, that small time may prove to be the beginning of great things."[15]

Joe and Betty had sailed from New York on July 13. In letters Swamiji wrote to Betty (one dated "the 29th, 1895" surely meaning *July* 29th, and one dated July 1895), he referred in fun to "Miss Joe Joe's fly-bite" (inflicted apparently in abundance at Camp Percy) and to her "terrible time at sea." He also sent "shiploads of love" to Alberta and Hollister who were now in Germany.[16]

Wednesday, August 7, was Swami Vivekananda's final day at Thousand Island Park. That morning he took a walk with Christine Greenstidle and Mary Funke, saying that he wanted to be alone with them, since they had been late-arrivals. Mary Funke later wrote:

We went up a hill about half a mile away. All was woods and solitude. Finally he selected a low-branched tree, and we sat under the lowspreading branches. Instead of the expected talk, he suddenly said: "Now we will meditate. We shall be like Buddha under the Bo-tree." He seemed to turn to bronze, so still was he. Then a thunderstorm came up, and it poured. He never noticed it. I raised my umbrella and protected him as much as possible. Completely absorbed in his meditation, he was oblivious of everything. Soon we heard shouts in the distance. The others had come out after us with raincoats and umbrellas. Swamiji looked around regretfully, for we *had* to go, and said, "Once more am I in Calcutta in the rains."[17]

That evening the swami left Thousand Island Park, returning by river steamer and then train to New York City. The next week and a half was a busy period as he prepared to sail the Atlantic. Nearly every night he met with Vedanta students[18], and on several mornings he paid calls to Frank Leggett. On one of these occasions, he carried with him a wedding gift about which Frank wrote to Betty, saying:

Swami made me another call yesterday at 7:30 a.m.; this is his unconventional hour of visiting me of late. A porter accompanied him hugging a very heavy rug[19] from a prince of India, [*the Maharaja of Khetri*][20]. I have it spread over my drawing room floor and it looks very well. It is quite thick and heavy and of harmonious coloring and marked with conventional flowers. This was one of two sent to him from India.... The gift and presentation were truly original.[21]

[1] CW6:306.
[2] Rems, p. 116.
[3] Rems, p. 230.
[4] Rems, p. 153.
[5] Culme-Seymour Coll., March 20, 1930, July 21, 1941; Wedell Coll., June 26, 1937.
[6] Whitmarsh, 1983.
[7] Sister Devamata, "Memories of India and Indians," PB, June 1932, p. 302.
[8] Swami Atmaghanananda, "Further Light on Swami Vivekananda's Inspired Talks," VK, August 1963, p. 193.
[9] New Disc. 3:134.
[10] New Disc, pp. 122, 156-58.
[11] Swami Vivekananda, "Intro ductory Narrative," Inspired Talks, My Master, and Other Writings, edited by Swami Nikhilananda (New York: Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre, 1958), pp. v-vi.
[12] New Disc. 5:264.
[13] MacLeod recording, 7-10-43.
[14] CW5:90.
[15] New Disc. 3:220.
[16] CW5:87-88.
[17] Rems., p. 256.
[18] New Disc. 3:182-83.
[19] For many years this 8 x 11-foot rug was used at Ridgely Manor. Later it was given by Frances Leggett to the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre in New York City. (New Discoveries 3:190-91)
[20] New Disc, p. 190.
[21] New Disc, pp. 190-91.

THE BEGINNING OF GREAT THINGS

On August 17 Frank and Swamiji sailed for Paris, where Betty and Joe had become thoroughly ensconsed. Betty had written to Frank on July 24: "Joe and I are pluming our feathers and you will enjoy the results more than any. Such lovely things and delight in selecting them. I feel far more girlish than eighteen years ago on the same quest [referring to the year she spent in Paris prior to her marriage to William Sturges]."[1] One imagines, however, that Betty did most of the "pluming of feathers" and that Joe "who had no taste anyway" went along out of love for her sister and an instinctive understanding of Betty's need to be outstandingly fashionable for the man she loved. This was undoubtedly a period of mixed feelings for Joe, being surrounded by what was becoming more and more distasteful to her: the cosmopolitan, high-fashion world. Though Vivekananda himself would later describe Joe as "that Paris-dressed young lady[2]," it was always Betty who saw to it that she was so[3]. More and more, Joe's mind was immersed only in Vivekananda and Vedanta.

Just one year earlier the bank had been pressing Betty about the mortgage on the Thirty-fourth Street house. Now that time was gone. Francis H. Leggett's established wealth was solid, something at last on which she could build the life she had been seeking and the life she and her family would now have. Betty's mind, just now, though, was on immediate plans for the four of them, Frank and Swamiji, Joe and she, telling Frank in a letter: "[We] will take all the tramways on top and see Paris on every corner from that perch. There is so much to be done when we are four, more perhaps than a smaller number because of the exchange of opinions and impressions which with intelligent people is a rare addition to travel and sight-seeing. So gather up your Hindoo and come as soon as convenient...."[4]

The sixteen days Vivekananda was in Paris he stayed with Frank at the Hotel Continental, 3 Rue de Castiglione, regarded as a fine hotel and facing the Tuileries Garden. During the two sisters' first weeks in Paris, they had stayed "five flights up" on the top floor of the Hotel Louis Le-Grande, 26 Rue de Trocadero, where "all of Paris" lay at their feet. Joe always loved this little hotel and stayed there often during her life[5]. But when Frank and Swamiji arrived, the women moved to the Hotel de Hollande, 18 and 20 Rue de la Paix, a short distance from the Continental, on the opposite side of the Place Vendome. Later, after the wedding on September 9, Frank and Betty were to stay at the Hotel de Hollande for their honeymoon.[6] Joe's reminiscences tell us:

[Swami Vivekananda] came over to Paris with Mr. Leggett in August. There my sister and I stayed at the Holland House, and the Swami and Mr. Leggett stayed at a different hotel, but we saw them every day. At that time Mr. Leggett had a courier who always called Swami "Mon Prince!" And Swami said to him, "But I am not a prince. I am a Hindu monk." The courier answered, "You may call yourself that, but I am used to dealing with Princes, and I know one when I see one." His dignity impressed everyone. Yet, when someone once said to him, "You are so dignified, Swami," he replied, "It isn't me, it's my walk."[7]

The courier had come to Paris, bringing Alberta and Hollister from their new schools in Geneva, so they could attend the wedding.[8]

Now Betty had things her way as brides often do, and the four of them went all over Paris, presumably from the tops of those trams and on the omnibus.[9] Frank had been in Paris in the spring of 1886, very correctly following Baedeker and a courier. In nine full days he had "done" Paris.[10] Betty and Joe, on the other hand, had lived here. They knew Paris well, and by this time must have been fairly fluent in French. The sisters' knowledge of the city and Swamiji's need to know and understand more about this center of culture fitted perfectly. Swami Vivekananda must have foreseen an important center for Vedanta work here, and must also have known the role Joe would later play in the establishing of that center. This, the wedding time, the happy touring time in their lives, was all necessary for what was to come. And so Joe and Betty must have talked and pointed here and there, and Vivekananda must have leaned forward, paying close attention, in an effort to learn all he could possibly learn.

Whatever aspect Swamiji manifested to Joe, she hugged with gratitude and made it hers forever, but it was primarily her nature as a good student that made it easy for her to grasp teachings he held out for her. *My religion is to learn*[11] became a sacred litany for her, and once in later life when asked to fill out a form, she wrote on the line marked *occupation* "to learn."[12] Joe was to say many times over the years of her long life, "It was because Swamiji was new and fresh every day that he held one!"[13]

Swami Vivekananda, writing in a letter several weeks after his visit to Paris, stated: "Saw Paris a good [deal]. Miss Josephine McLeod a New York friend showed it all over to me for a month [*actually sixteen days*]. Even there the kind American girl!"[14]

Betty and Joe had also acquired a number of good friends in Paris over the years, and the swami met a few of them at this time, including Gerald Nobel, who was later to arrange for Vivekananda to speak at the Congress of the History of Religions held in Paris in the fall of 1900. Nobel's words written about himself indicate why he and Vivekananda would have been drawn to one another. He stated: "I am not a book lover in the sense of a collector; I give them freely away; I am lacking the taste of ownership and it makes holes in my library!... As regards religion, I am so fully an adept at any religious thought that I am at home with a Buddhist, with a Christian, with a Calvinist, or a son of Mohammed! I feel one with every human soul!"[15] Nobel also wrote of Betty that "her religion was peace, love, kindness, patience and tenderness."[16]

According to a letter Swami Vivekananda wrote to E. T. Sturdy on September 5 from Paris, he was ill a few days while there.[17] The only other negative of his first visit to Paris was the fact that though he and Frank stayed in a first class hotel, it had no bathing facilities. Later he wrote about this in "The East and the West," first explaining how important water and cleanliness are to Hindus, then stating:

A millionaire friend of mine once invited me to come over to Paris: Paris, which is the capital of modern civilisation -- Paris, the heaven of luxury, fashion, and merriment on earth -- the centre of arts and sciences. My friend accommodated me in a huge palatial hotel, where arrangements for meals were in a right royal style, but, for bath -- well, no name of it. Two days I suffered silently -- till at last I could bear it no longer, and had to address my friend thus: "Dear brother, let this royal luxury be with you and yours! I am panting to get out of this situation. Such hot weather, and no facility of bathing; if it continues like this, I shall be in imminent danger of turning mad like a rabid dog." Hearing this, my friend became very sorry for me and annoyed with the hotel authorities, and said, "I won't let you stay here anymore, let us go and find out a better place." Twelve of the chief hotels were seen, but no place for bathing was there in any of them. There are independent bathing houses, where one can go and have a bath for four or five rupees. Good heavens![18]

Swami Vivekananda may also have taken a drive in a phaeton into the suburbs with the Duchess of Pomar, a sixty-five-year-old dowager, possibly a friend of the sisters. She was known for her keen interest in the occult, and was said to actually *commune* with Mary Queen of Scots, whose incarnation she believed herself to be. She was distinguished for her hospitality to the elite of Parisian society, and for learned gatherings at her home to hear scientific, literary, and religious lectures.[19]

At last, on Monday, September 9, Betty and Frank were married, the ceremony taking place at the Episcopal Church of the Holy Trinity, 23, Avenue George V, said to be "the most beautiful example of English Gothic on the Continent." It is now known as the American Cathedral.[20] This being the second marriage for both, the ceremony may have been performed in the small chapel of St Paul, the Traveler.[21]

Joe and Swami Vivekananda were, of course, the witnesses. The guests were Alberta and Hollister and a few friends, perhaps including Gerald Nobel, Anna Imthurn, and Maud Stumm. Maud Stumm later wrote her reminiscences of Swami Vivekananda, stating:

It was in the fall of 1895 that I first saw him, sitting with his back to the light in Mrs. Leggett's sitting room in Paris. I did not catch his name, but presently found myself next to him, and being asked if I spoke French. He said he didn't either;.[22]

Whether this meeting took place before or after the wedding is not clear. It seems very possible that since none of Betty's Paris friends had yet met her groom-to-be or the swami, she, out of courtesy and exuberance, would have arranged for some sort of gathering before the wedding. Her American friend, Maud Stumm, may have already met Frank, but surely she would have been included in any gathering of Betty's friends, and this incident would have taken place then.

[1] Late and Soon, p. 100.
[2] Letters SV, p. 364.
[3] Whitmarsh, 1988.
[4] Late and Soon, p. 101.
[5] Wedell Coll., January T . 1938; Late and Soon, p. 100.
[6] Swami Vidyatmananda "Swami Vivekananda in France," PB, March 196- pp. 126-27.
[7] Rems., pp. 230-31.
[8] Friends Coll., Josephine lac Leod to Frances Leggett, 1941.
[9] New Disc. 3:204.
[10] Late and Soon, p. 63.
[11] Culme-Seymour Coll., May 14, 1941.
[12] Culme-Seymour Coll, October 30, 1940.
[13] Culme-Seymour Coll, December 7, 1938.
[14] New Disc. 3:251.
[15] Late and Soon, pp. 30-31.
[16] Late and Soon.
[17] CW8:350.
[18] CW5:471-72.
[19] New Disc. 3:204.
[20] Swami Vidyatmananda in France," PB, March 1967, p. 1"27.
[21] New Disc. 3:205-06.
[22] Rems., p. 263.

A YOGI COMES TO LONDON

Joe's reminiscences continue:

On the ninth of September Mr. and Mrs. Leggett were married, and the next day Swami left for London to be the guest of Mr. E. T. Sturdy, who had already met some of the Ramakrishna monks in India and who was a Sanskrit scholar.[1]

Actually E. T. Sturdy's home was a train ride from London in Caversham, where he and his wife, Lucie, had a place called "High View."[2] In a letter dated only September 1895, Swamiji let Joe know that he had arrived safely. Though it seems likely that Swami Vivekananda would have written to Joe during the summer of 1895 when he sent her and Betty the birch bark books, this letter is the first he wrote to her of those that have been published. The first two sentences reveal the open line of communication that now existed between him and Joe. He knew she would be anxious for his welfare and would want to know right away that he had arrived safely in London; thus his apology for not writing immediately, and thus his reassurance that he was all right. He wrote from High View, September, 1895:

Dear Joe,

> A thousand pardons for not promptly writing to you. I arrived safe in London, found my friend, and am all right in his home. It is beautiful. His wife is surely an angel, and his life is full of India. He has been years there - mixing with the Sannyasins, eating their food, etc., etc.; so you see I am very happy. I found already several retired Generals from India; they were very civil and polite to me. That wonderful knowledge of the Americans that identify every black man with the negro is entirely absent here, and nobody even stares at me in the street.
>
> I am very much more at home here than anywhere out of India. The English people know us, we know them. The standard of education and civilisation is very high here -- that makes a great change, so does the education of many generations.
>
> Have the Turtle-doves [Leggetts] returned [from honeymoon trip]? The Lord bless them and theirs for ever and ever. How are the babies -- Alberta and Hollister? Give them my oceans of love and know it yourself.
>
> My friend being a Sanskrit scholar, we are busy working on the great commentaries of Shankara etc. Nothing but philosophy and religion here, Joe. I am going to try to get up classes in October in London.
>
> Ever affectionately with love and blessings,
> Vivekananda[3]

Where Joe was at this point is not clear. Alberta and Hollister were back in their respective schools in Geneva, and Joe had "remained on the Continent to keep an eye on them."[4] The "turtle-doves" were still on their honeymoon: A stay at the Hotel de Hollande had been followed by a day or two in Fontainebleau; and they were now in Switzerland.[5] In any event, neither Joe nor Betty wrote to Swamiji. Then finally he wrote to Betty a letter dated only October 1895 from Reading. Addressing her as "Dear Mother," he asked:

You have not forgotten your son? Where are you now? And Tante [Joe] and the babies? What about our saintly worshipper at your shrine? Joe Joe is not entering "Nirvana" so soon, but her deep silence almost seems to be a big "Samadhi".[6]

The several weeks Swami Vivekananda spent with Sturdy were quiet and happy. The little village of Caversham was beautiful and peaceful. Here Swamiji could soak in the quiet and enjoy hours at a stretch in reading, study, and meditation, and he could walk through the greens and along the Thames by himself or with Sturdy. Sturdy was a former theosophy student who had visited India and met Swami Vivekananda's brother disciple, Swami Shivananda. He was a student of Sanskrit, and Swami Vivekananda helped him during this period in producing a

faithful translation and commentary on the *Narada Bhakti Sutras*, which was published in 1896.[7]

By mid-September Swami Vivekananda had probably visited Henrietta Muller, who had also invited him to come to London. She lived at Pinckney's Green, Maidenhead, just twelve miles from Reading, and reachable by train, boat, or cab. Henrietta Muller was to become for a time a figure central to Swami Vivekananda's work in the West.

Like Joe MacLeod, Henrietta Muller was a maverick, but her style was just the opposite of Joe's. Thoroughly independent in her approach to life, she had become a shouting feminist with a militant approach to getting what she wanted. Marie Louise Burke has written about her: Even during the 1880s ... she created something of a sensation by adamantly refusing to pay taxes on her newly purchased London house as a protest against being denied the right to vote. As a result, much of her best furniture was carted away, while a crowd of incensed working men and women booed the bailiffs for so mistreating a poor defenseless lady.... "The Press," as she said, "took it up very generally, there was a scarcely a newspaper in England that had not a leading article on the question of women's votes." Indeed, Miss Muller's heroic stand against the tax-collector attracted wide attention. She was one of the first English women, if not *the* first, to attack the problem of women's suffrage in so head-on a manner.[8]

Sometime between 1887 and 1891 Henrietta had joined the Theosophical Society; and on September 14, 1893, she read a paper entitled "Theosophy as Underlying All Scriptures" before the Theosophical Congress of the Parliament of Religions in Chicago.[9] It is likely that she met Swami Vivekananda at this time. By l894 Henrietta had severed her connections with the Theosophical Society, and in 1895 extended the invitation to Swami Vivekananda to come to London.

And now Swamiji was in London, and E. T. Sturdy and Henrietta Muller were ready to do what they could to serve his work. For Sturdy's part, he wanted Vivekananda to move slowly in London due to the adverse image of Eastern philosophy which some theosophical scandals had produced. In early October 1895, Swami Vivekananda wrote to Sara Bull about the work, "We do not want to make any noise but go silently, as the theosophists have spoiled the atmosphere with their ludicrous revelations."[10]

His work began in mid-October with a lecture on the 17th in Maidenhead at the Town Hall on "The Eastern Doctrine of Love."[11] The lecture, though attended by a small crowd, was followed up a week later by a rather lengthy and well-written report, which made clear that Swami Vivekananda had absolutely nothing to do with the theosophical society.[12]

Swamiji would one day comment on the tremendous effect of Josephine MacLeod's presence on the success of his work, so it is significant that though he had E. T. Sturdy and Henrietta Muller about to help him get the London work off the ground, it was nevertheless to Joe that he wrote, suggesting that she help. In a letter dated only October 1895, he told her:

Dear Joe Joe,

> I was so glad to hear from you. I was afraid you had forgotten me.
> I am going to have a few lectures in and about London. One of them, a public one, will be at Princes' Hall on the 22nd at 8-30.
> Come over and try to form a class. I have as yet done almost nothing here. Of course, breaking the ice is slow always. It took me two years in America to work up that little which we had in New York.
>
> With love for all,
> Yours ever Vivekananda[13]

At this point Betty and Frank were still honeymooning in Switzerland. It is possible that Vivekananda's call to Joe to "come over and try to form a class" had been enough for Joe to inject her own enthusiasm into Betty and Frank and persuade them to change all their plans. In any event, the arrival of all three in London in mid-October was a very pleasant surprise for Swamiji, and with an obvious sense of relief, he wrote to her on October 20:

Dear Joe Joe,

> This note is to welcome the Leggetts to London. This being in a sense my native country, I send you my welcome first, I shall receive your welcome next Tuesday the 22nd at Princes' Hall half past eight p.m.
> I am so busy till Tuesday, I am afraid, I shall not be able to run in to see you. I, however, shall come to see you any day after that. Possibly I may come on Tuesday.
>
> With everlasting love and blessings,
> Yours, Vivekananda[14]

The lecture on October 22 at Prince's Hall was attended by few. It had been poorly publicized, and few people had as yet read or heard of the swami. However, the real publicity came after the lecture when several London newspapers wrote it up. Joe's reminiscences tell us:
After Swami had been there some time he wrote, "Come over and get up classes." But by the time we went over he was already lecturing. He lectured very eloquently at Princes'(sic) Hall, and the next day the papers were full of the news that a great Indian yogi had come to London. He was very honoured there.[15]

Newspaper accounts follow:

The *Standard* of October 23, 1895:

> Since the days of Ramahoun [Ram Mohan] Roy, with the single exception of Keshub Chander Sen, there has not appeared on an English platform a more interesting Indian figure than the Brahman who lectured in Princes' (sic) Hall last night....
>
> The lecture was a most fearless and eloquent exposition of the pantheistic philosophy of the Vedanta school....[16]

The London *Morning Post* of October 23:

> He spoke with a good deal of fluency, and his remarks were listened to with attention by the somewhat small audience.[17]

The London *Daily Chronicle* of October 23:

> He is an Indian Yogi, that is to say, one who has formally renounced the world and gives himself to study and devotion, and not, as he amusingly pointed out last night, one who did juggling tricks or flew through the air.[18]

[1] Rems, p. 231.
[2] New Disc. 3:209-10.
[3] CW8:351.
[4] Late and Soon, p. 101.
[5] Late and Soon pp. 17-18
[6] CW6:343-44.
[7] New Disc. 3:233.
[8] New Disc, pp. 227-28.
[9] New Disc, p. 228.[10] New Disc, p. 232.[11] New Disc, p. 236.
[12] New Disc, pp. 237-40.[13] CW8:354.[14] CW8, pp. 354-55.[15] Rems., p. 231.
[16] New Disc. 3:246. [17] New Disc, p. 248.[18] New Disc, pp. 248-49.

TRIUMPH OF TRUTH

Now the swami's work in London began in earnest, beginning with a series of classes at a Mr. Chamier's which may have been arranged by Joe[1]. This was followed up by several weeks of interviews, lectures, and more classes[2]. Generally, Swamiji's letters of this period reflect a true rapport with the English people, a genuine liking and respect for them, quietly linked with a genuine sense of shock that he himself was being so readily accepted by them. "Sometimes I wonder whether my face has turned white..." he wrote to Betty Leggett from Caversham.[3]

On Tuesday, October 29 he moved to 80 Oakley Street in Chelsea, where he gave eight classes a week for most of November. It is what he meant by "lodgings" in the following letter written to Joe on Thursday, October 31, 1895:

Dear Joe Joe,

> I shall be only too glad to come to lunch on Friday and see Mr. Coit at the Albemarle.
> Two American ladies, mother and daughter, living in London came in to the class last night -- Mrs. and Miss Netter. They were very sympathetic of course. The class there at Mr. Chamier's is finished. I shall begin at my lodgings from Saturday night next. I expect to have a pretty good-sized room or two for my classes. I have been also invited to Moncure Conway's Ethical Society where I speak on the 10th. I shall have a lecture in the Balboa [Balloon] Society next Tuesday. The Lord will help. I am not sure whether I can go up with you on Saturday. You will have great fun in the country anyway, and Mr. and Mrs. Sturdy are such nice people.
>
> With love and blessings,
> Vivekananda.

P.S. Kindly order some vegetables for me. I don't care much for rice -- bread will do as well. I have become an awful vegetarian now.[4]

Mr. Coit was Stanton Coit, a leader of liberal society and said to be broad-minded, eloquent and stimulating as a preacher[5]. It is likely that Joe would have known him from her earlier years spent in London. He was founder of two local Ethical Societies, and his ideas would have appealed to Joe. Marie Louise Burke has written: "He was among the last of those late nineteenth-century 'materialists' whom Moncure Conway had defended against the attacks of Christian prelates. These 'materialists,' Conway had pointed out, were 'men of self-sacrifice, giving up life and fortune in the pursuit of an ideal society ... men of plain living and high thinking, almost ascetic in their self-denial, and ever dreaming of high education, of cooperation, and other schemes for the moral, intellectual, or social advancement of mankind.'"[6]

It is likely that he introduced Swami Vivekananda to other thinkers in London. In later years Joe would remark, "It is important for the Lord's work that certain people meet."[7] At this early point in her relationship with Vivekananda, she was already facilitating meetings between the swami and others who could contribute in some way to his work or who would serve him personally. Her ability (as on shipboard) to go about here and there, quickly striking up friendships was an indispensable ingredient in her character that made her a very necessary devotee for Swami Vivekananda.

Not only was Joe's connection with friends helpful to Swamiji, but now in London she made three new friends herself through his work, and these three would remain close to her for as long as they lived. Chronologically, E. T. Sturdy was the first of these. In the swami's letter to Joe of October 31 he had mentioned that he might not be able to join Joe on Saturday at the Sturdys' home. Whether he was or was not able to do so remains unknown, but it is certain that Joe did go to the country and stay with Lucie and Edward Sturdy, with whom she apparently

established immediate rapport. One year later she wrote to a friend and described E. T. Sturdy as one "whose life has been consecrated to this work from childhood. While a rock in himself both socially & spiritually he acknowledges and reverences the Swami as the veritable Prophet and that fact appeals to everyone who comes in contact with them."[8]

The second lifelong friendship formed by Joe in London this fall of 1895 was that of Lady Isabel Margesson. Sister of the 7th Earl of Buckinghamshire and wife of Mortimer Reginald Margesson (later, Sir Mortimer), she was a dedicated advocate of social and educational reform and secretary of the progressive Sesame Club.[9] In later years Joe was to recall that she had read about Swami Vivekananda in the London newspapers after his October 22 lecture at Prince's Hall, and that she had gone right away to call on him, later letting him use her home for his talks. Her two children, Kitty and David Margesson, were blessed by Swamiji, and Joe once stated, "Isabel's and my friendship [is] based on the Eternal that came into each of our lives."[10] Joe was also once to state that Lady Isabel Margesson "played *my* game,"[11] meaning perhaps that she, too, saw Swamiji as a prophet and reverenced him as such. Joe was forever grateful to Lady Isabel Margesson for what she referred to as "her *real* service to Swamiji and me."[12] This might refer to the fact that it was in the Margesson home that Swami Vivekananda met the young, fiery Margaret Noble who would come to be regarded as his spiritual daughter, and who would also later become Joe MacLeod's closest friend.

On Sunday, November 10, 1895, in Lady Isabel Margesson's drawing room sat Swami Vivekananda and some members of the Sesame Club, invited because of their great good judgment and keen discrimination when presented with new concepts and ideas. Later, Margaret Noble (Sister Nivedita) wrote in *The Master as I Saw Him* (hereafter *The Master*), "Most of us [that day], I am inclined to think had been singled out for the afternoon's hospitality, on the very score of our unwillingness to believe, for the difficulty of convincing us of the credibility of religious propaganda in general."[13]

Margaret Noble's family, of Scottish descent, had been settled in Ireland for five centuries before Margaret was born -- October 28, 1867. Her father and his father before him had been ministers of the Wesleyan church, and her paternal grandparents had been active in the great Irish fight for Home Rule, in resistance to the rule of the British. Margaret as a little girl loved to go with her father when he conducted services or visited the poor. She was just ten years old when her father died, leaving her with the imprint of religious zeal. From her grandfather, Margaret imbibed a passion for Ireland and for freedom.[14]

After her father's death, Margaret was sent to Halifax College, where in 1884 she passed her final examination at the age of seventeen. For the next six years Margaret taught at three different schools, developing a keen interest in the new reform methods of pedagogy developed by Pestalozzi and Froebel. In 1890 she was invited to help start a new school in London, and since her mother, sister, and brother had already moved to nearby Wimbledon, Margaret moved in with them.[15]

It was at this time that she embarked on an experimental type of teaching based on freedom. There was neither formal curriculum nor formal learning. Children were taught as they played. Out of their play came learning in a normal, natural way.[16]

Margaret Noble soon became known in educational and intellectual circles in London, and she made the fortunate acquaintance of Lady Isabel Margesson and Lady Ripon. They formed a select little literary group which came to be known as the Sesame Club, and it was here that Margaret met such notables as George Bernard Shaw and Thomas Huxley who spoke to the Club.[17]

In the meantime, Margaret had been searching for some time for something that could satisfy her spiritually. Christian doctrine had become suspect to her keen and analytic mind. In her own words, many Christian doctrines had begun to seem "false and incompatible with Truth." In a lecture delivered in 1902 she stated about this difficult period in her life: "For seven years I was in this wavering state of mind, very unhappy and yet very, very eager to seek the Truth. I shunned going to church and yet sometimes my longing to bring restfulness to my spirit

impelled me to rush into church and be absorbed in the service in order to feel at peace within, as I had hitherto done, and as others round me were doing. But alas! no peace, no rest was there for my troubled soul all eager to know the Truth."[18]
Margaret studied natural science, thinking she would find the answer there. She took up Buddhism and for three years threw herself into that. Then came the turning point -- Sunday, November 10, 1895, when she attended the afternoon lecture of Swami Vivekananda in Lady Isabel Margesson's West End drawing room. It was not, however, a sudden turning at all. Margaret was not easy to convince. In light of the fact that Margaret Noble would become fast friends with Joe MacLeod, how different was her reaction to him and his teachings than Joe's immediate one had been, when she had first heard him. It is worthwhile to note what Margaret Noble later stated about her first impressions of Swamiji and her early relationship with his ideas. In *The Master* she wrote:

> The time was a cold Sunday afternoon in November and the place ... a West-end drawing room. But he was seated, facing a half-circle of listeners, with the fire on the hearth behind him, and as he answered question after question, breaking now and then into the chanting of some Sanskrit text in illustration of his reply, the scene must have appeared to him, while twilight passed into darkness, only as a curious variant upon the Indian garden, or on the group of hearers gathered at sundown round the Sadhu who sits beside the well, or under the tree outside the village-bounds. Never again in England did I see the Swami, as a teacher, in such simple fashion. Later, he was always lecturing, or the questions he answered were put with formality by members of larger audiences. Only this first time we were but fifteen or sixteen guests, intimate friends, many of us, and he sat amongst us, in his crimson robe and girdle, as one bringing us news from a far land, with a curious habit of saying now and again "Shiva! Shiva!" and wearing that look of mingled gentleness and loftiness that one sees on the faces of those who live much in meditation, that look, perhaps, that Raphael has painted for us, on the brow of the Sistine Child....
>
> As a religious teacher, I saw that although he had a system of thought to offer, nothing in that system would claim him for a moment if he found that truth led elsewhere. And to the extent that this recognition implies, I became his disciple. For the rest, I studied his teaching sufficiently to become convinced of its coherence, but never, till I had had experiences that authenticated them, did I inwardly cast in my lot with the final justification of the things he came to say. Nor did I at that time, though deeply attracted by his personality, dream of the immense distance which I was afterwards to see, as between his development and that of any other thinker or man of genius whom I could name.[19]

Formal discipleship for Margaret Noble did not come in the fall of 1895. At that time she only attended two of the swami's talks: "The Religion of Love" on November 16 and "Jnana and Karma" on November 23, both at 80 Oakley Street[20], where she took many notes and plied him with questions. It is probable that she met Joe on one of these occasions, but as Joe later admitted, Margaret struck her "as hard and cold" when she first met her. About this, Margaret later wrote to her, "What were the clouds of darkness that covered me in the old days? Surely no one was ever so blind or ignorant! You must have been right when you thought me hard and cold. I must have been so and it must have been the result of the long effort to [attain] things by the mind alone, without the feelings."[21]

[1] New Disc, pp. 253-54.[2] Life II, p. 48.1[3] CW6:344.[4] CW'8:355-56.[5] New Disc. 3:261.[6] New Disc. 3:261.[7] Culme-Seymour Coll., September 7, 1946.
[8] Friends Coll., Josephine Mac leod to Sara Bull, September 17, 1896.
[9] Life II, p. 49[10] Culme-Seymour Coll., December 9, 1943..[11] Culme-Seymour Coll, October 2, 1940.[12] Culme-Seymour Coll, May 30, 1941.[13] CWSN 1:20.[14] SNRV, pp. 1-2.[15] SNRV, pp. 2-3.[16] SNRV, pp. 3-4.[17] SNRV, p. 4. [18] CWSN2:470.
[19] CWSNl:17-18, 22.[20] SNRV, p. 13.[21]Letters SN I, #134, pp. 365-66.

SPELLBINDING INTERLUDE

On November 27 the swami set sail on the *Brittanic* bound for New York, beginning ten "very tedious days" during which he was seasick for the first time in his life.[1] But on the morning of Thursday, December 5 he managed to write to Alberta Sturges:

I am going soon to see the "Heavenly Pair". Mr. Leggett is a saint as I have told you already, and your mother is a born empress, every inch of her, with a saint's heart inside.

...In your country, Alberta, the Vedantic thought was introduced in the beginning by ignorant "cranks", and one has to work his way through the difficulties created by such introductions. You may have noticed that only a few men or women of the upper classes ever joined my classes in America. Again in America the upper classes being the rich, their whole time is spent in enjoying their wealth and imitating (aping?) the Europeans. On the other hand in England the Vedantic ideas have been introduced by the most learned men in the country, and there are a large number among the upper classes in England who are very thoughtful. So you will be astonished to hear that I found my grounds all prepared, and I am convinced that my work will have more hold on England than America....

... Joe Joe has been the same kind good pure friend to me here as in America, and my debt to your family is simply immense. My love and blessings to Hollister and you.[2]

The following morning, Friday, December 6, the ship arrived at the docks of Manhattan, where it is likely that his disciple Swami Kripananda (Leon Landsberg) was waiting to escort him to his new lodgings at 228 West Thirty-ninth Street.[3]

Just two days after his arrival in New York Swamiji wrote to Joe:

> December 8, 1895
>
> Dear Joe Joe,
>
> After 10 days of the most disastrous voyage I ever had I arrived in New York. I was so so sick for days together.
>
> After the clean and beautiful cities of Europe, New York appears very dirty and miserable. I am going to begin work next Monday. Your bundles have been safely delivered to the heavenly pair, as Alberta calls them. They are as usual very kind. Saw Mrs. and Mr. Salomon and other friends. By chance met Mrs. Peak at Mrs. Guernsey's but yet have no news of Mrs. Rothinburger [Roethlesberger]. Going with the birds of paradise to Ridgely this Christmas. Wish ever so much you were there.
>
> Had you a nice visit with Lady Isabelle? Kindly give my love to all our friends and know oceans yourself.
>
> Excuse this short letter. I shall write bigger ones by the next.
>
> Ever yours in the Lord,
> Vivekananda[4]

From Monday, December 9, beginning with an introductory class in the evening, to Monday, December 23, Swamiji gave nineteen classes on the four yogas: jnana, karma, raja, and bhakti. The first class was so crowded that it became immediately apparent that both parlor rooms would be needed for morning and evening classes. On December 12 a newspaper advertisement was placed for a rapid shorthand writer to take down Vivekananda's lectures. Josiah Goodwin applied and was hired, winning out over two other applicants[5]. Joe was still in Europe at this point, but her reminiscences speak lovingly of J. J. Goodwin's initial association with Swami Vivekananda.

Mr. Goodwin was the stenographer who [was] engaged at [228 West Thirty-ninth Street] to take down the lectures of Swami Vivekananda. Mr. Goodwin was a court stenographer, which meant two hundred words a minute, and he was very expensive; but as we did not want to lose any of Vivekananda's words, we engaged him. After the first week Mr. Goodwin refused any money; when they said to him, "What do you mean?" he said, "If Vivekananda gives his life,

the least I can do is to give my service." He followed Swami around the world, and we have seven volumes hot from his lips that Mr. Goodwin took down.[6]
Joe referred to the seven volumes of *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*. An eighth volume was published in 1951.
It is important to note that, according to Marie Louise Burke, it would not have been possible for Goodwin to work for the Vedanta Society without receiving any pay. The members of the Society covered his salary among themselves. Once Goodwin stated: "If I am to work for the Vedanta -- and my wishes are all that way, I think I may say my heart is thoroughly in the work -- I am afraid I shall have to accept bare living, but beyond that I would not consent to any arrangement[7]." Perhaps it happened that Goodwin, standing in the initial glow and joy of Swamiji's presence, did at first refuse any salary; then after a week or two, found reality did not fill the stomach and thus was forced to voice a retraction.
Finally on the evening of December 23 Swami Vivekananda left for much-needed rest and recreation at Ridgely to spend ten glorious holidays with Frank and Betty Leggett. Of his time at Ridgely little is known about this Christmastime visit except for one glimpse provided by Frank in a letter written to his new sister-in-law on January 6, 1896. Apparently the letter was mailed with an enclosure letter from the swami to Joe. Frank expressed his closeness to Joe in his opening salutation, "My beloved Sister." Then he wrote:
You will hardly stop to read this short message from "Incense" when accompanied, as it is, with one from "God's Own," so I will say but little at this time as is always my custom in his inspiring presence. One night at Ridgely we were all spellbound by his eloquence -- such thoughts I have never heard expressed by mortal man such as he uttered for two and a half hours. We were all deeply affected. Swamiji was inspired to a degree that I have never heard before. He leaves us soon and perhaps we shall never see him again, but he will leave an ineffaceable impression on our hearts that will comfort us to the end of our earthly careers.[8]
Frank then assured Joe that she would be welcome to their home the coming summer.
The reference to Swamiji's leaving had to do with his planned return to London. Back in New York on January 3, he wrote to Sara Bull, saying: "I enjoyed my visit with the Leggetts exceedingly. It has braced me for further work. I am very well both physically and mentally."[9]

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[1] CW6:352.
[2] Ibid., pp. 351-52.
[3] New Disc. 3:313-14.
[4] CWS:360.
[5] New Disc. 3:335
[6] Rems., pp. 231-32.
[7] New Disc. 3:338.
[8] Late and Soon, pp. 101-02.
[9] New Disc. 3:386.

LIFE AND FUN (Part Two)

"I simply admire Joe in her tact and quiet way. She is a feminine statesman or woman. She can wield a kingdom."

-- Swami Vivekananda,
Letter July 6, 1896.

Swami Vivekananda now entered the last phase of his first visit to the West. From December 1895 to February 1896 he gave his concluding class talks and public lectures in New York, granting heavy doses of Vedanta in all its splendour to the devotees. At this time he also appointed some officers of the Vedanta Society of New York, which he had founded in November 1894; and it was probably at this time that Frank Leggett became President of the Society. According to *The Life*, "One of the swami's main purposes in organizing his classes into a society, besides carrying on the spiritual work he had commenced, was to bring about an interchange of ideals and ideas between the East and the West[1]." He would soon be leaving for India, and he wanted both his American and his London work to survive without him. Therefore organization was needed.

Though Swamiji was extremely busy, from time to time he attended dinners with friends. It is known, for example, that sometime during January or February he attended a formal dinner given by Betty Leggett at the Metropolitan Club, said to be "a very grand and exclusive establishment, known to New Yorkers as 'the millionaires' club.'"[2]

Leaving New York on March 2, 1896, Swamiji began a criss-cross series of visits. A journey westward to Detroit was followed by a trip back east to Boston, where he stayed twelve days. There he spoke informally with Harvard students at Sara Bull's home, then gave a formal talk at the University. As a result, Harvard offered him the Chair of Eastern Philosophy, which he did not accept, being a sannyasin[3]. From Boston he travelled back west to Chicago, where he stayed for ten days, then returned east to New York for several days before leaving for London. While in New York he may have spent a day or two with Betty and Frank Leggett.

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[1] Life II, p. 71.
[2] New Disc. 3:492.
[3] Life II, P. 76.

VIVEKANANDA'S EMISSARY

Joe remained on the Continent now for some time, keeping an eye on Alberta and Hollister Sturges. Though separated by an ocean from Betty and Francis Leggett, correspondence between them was loving, and brought them together as a family. On February 10, 1896, Frank wrote to Joe who was in Bordighera, addressing her as "My sweet Sister," and expressing his personal appreciation of the fact that she always devoted a line or two in her own letters to her "devoted brother."[1]

During Swami Vivekananda's absence from England, E. T. Sturdy had been holding classes; and as early as January 16, Swamiji alluded to them in a letter to Sturdy, saying: "I have very enthusiastic accounts of your classes from Miss MacLeod. Mr. Galsworthy seems to be very much interested now[2]." Marie Louise Burke points out that this Galsworthy almost certainly would have been the young and as yet unpublished John Galsworthy[3]. The Galsworthy family was known to Joe MacLeod, and at some point she stayed with them[4]. It may be that from time to time Joe went over to London from the Continent that early winter of 1896, stayed with the Galsworthys, and attended the classes Sturdy was holding, taking Mr. Galsworthy with her. Or it may be that Galsworthy simply wrote to her about his own attendance at Sturdy's classes, and this she reported enthusiastically to Swamiji. Later, after Vivekananda's return to London, Joe was definitely there also, and it may have been at this point that she stayed with the Galsworthys.

Joe's reminiscences continue:

In April [of 1896, Swami Vivekananda] went back to London when he established classes and began a real definite work. He worked there all summer until July when he went to Switzerland with the Seviers[5].

Swami Vivekananda's headquarters in London was Lady Isabel Margesson's fashionable townhouse at 63, St. George's Road. The first two weeks of his stay in England had been spent with E. T. Sturdy and his wife in Reading. There he had been greeted by the welcome sight of his brother disciple Swami Saradananda, whom he had not seen since December 1890. For the last several months Vivekananda had been trying to persuade his brother monks in India to send him one or two helpers for the work in the West. Swamiji could then return to India at the end of the year, confident that the Vedanta work was being left in capable hands.

Sturdy had already arranged to rent Lady Isabel Margesson's townhouse from May through September[6], and the two swamis, Sturdy, and J. J. Goodwin moved there by May 1. Swamis Vivekananda and Saradananda had also spent a few days at Henrietta Muller's where they were joined by Vivekananda's brother Mahendra Datta, who had come to England for study. The two had not seen each other since at least 1890[7]. Mahendra Datta and Henrietta Muller also moved into the Margesson townhouse, and after the first week of June, John Fox, whom the swami had met during his Harvard visit[8], arrived in London and joined them too.

In early May Swamiji wrote to Mary Hale of Chicago: "We have a whole house to ourselves, you know, this time. It is small but convenient, and in London they do not cost so much as in America.... Some old friends are here, and Miss MacLeod came over from the Continent. She is good as gold, and as kind as ever. We have a nice little family, in the house, with another monk from India."[9] Whether Joe stayed in the Margesson house is not clear.

On Wednesday, May 6, two receptions were held for Swami Vivekananda at 63, St. George's Road and a schedule for the season was worked out. His talks were to be held in the drawing room where he had spoken that cold Sunday afternoon, November 10, 1895, when Margaret Noble had first met him. His schedule of classes that spring was quite full, and the drawing room was filled with interesting people. In *New Discoveries* Marie Louise Burke has described this period, providing a camera-eye view of those glorious days:

[Swami Vivekananda's] classes were held in a double drawing room that could seat approximately one hundred people. In front of the two windows at the street end was a table and chair, beside which Swamiji stood. In the middle of the side wall to his right was the fireplace, and between this and the windows was a table where Goodwin would sit to take notes, his back to the room. Along the far wall of the room was a large spring sofa, on which Mr.

Sturdy, Mahendra, and, later on, John Fox used to sit, acting more or less as ushers -- Mr. Sturdy being the usher-in-chief. In addition, there were, of course, other chairs both hard and soft in the room, many of them no doubt borrowed or rented for the classes. The French windows behind and to the left of where Swamiji stood opened onto a balcony that extended over the front vestibule. Here, when the weather permitted, several people could sit comfortably....

There was a stout, white-haired old lady ... who said: "I love the swami's talks. I can't understand much of the philosophy, but his voice and gestures charm me. I seem to be seeing someone out of the Bible."

Marie Louise Burke also reports that there was a middle-aged Russian woman who had seen Vivekananda in a dream, recognizing him when she attended his lecture at Prince's Hall, and that the Duchess of Albany, widow of Queen Victoria's youngest son, Leopold, also attended the classes, having intended to come *incognito*. The *New Discoveries* account continues:

Miss MacLeod ... would surely sweep in, dressed in the best Paris style and looking very elegant indeed among the conservative English women. Miss Margaret Noble ... would attend whenever she could.... And then there would be Captain and Mrs. Sevier, who had somehow found Swamiji and who were to become two of his most devoted and loyal followers. Like Margaret Noble, they would quite literally (and sooner than she) leave all that they had to follow [Swamiji], giving themselves, gently, steadily, and without stint to his work.[10]

The French writer Romain Rolland interviewed Joe MacLeod in later years, and recorded what she told him about Captain John Sevier and his wife Charlotte. Apparently when the Seviers heard the swami speak that spring of 1896 they were immediately struck by his thoughts, words, and personality. One day after Swamiji's talk, Captain Sevier went over to Joe and said: "You know this young man? Is he what he seems?" Joe told them yes, he was. Captain Sevier then said, "In that case one must follow him and with him find God." He then went to his wife and asked, "Will you let me become the swami's disciple?" She replied yes, she would. Then she asked, "Will you let *me* become the swami's disciple?" to which Captain Sevier replied with affectionate humour, "I don't know...."[11]

It was during this period in London that Joe and Margaret Noble established the foundation of what was to become the deepest of intimate friendships. In fact, "friendship" does not convey their relationship. One begins to have some idea of their feelings for each other only through their correspondence, which they maintained during the remainder of Margaret's lifetime. But the letterwriting would begin much later. For now, they were just devotee classmates, sitting next to each other for Swami Vivekananda's talks, Margaret taking copious notes -- Joe taking none; afterwards, Margaret asking the swami question after question -- Joe chatting with others. Often Joe would then take Margaret back to Wimbledon in a cab so they could carry on a discussion of their own.[12]

Though Margaret Noble was destined to become a monastic disciple of Swami Vivekananda, regarded by him as his spiritual daughter, one sees in statements made by Joe no trace of jealousy, but only great happiness and love for the younger woman. Margaret Noble would even acknowledge over her years and mounds of correspondence with Josephine MacLeod that it was Joe who taught her many things about Swami Vivekananda. Vastly different personalities as they were, and separated in age by nine years, it may seem curious that these two should become so close. But it is said, "Friends do not meet; they recognize each other." It is also of note that later on there would be some who would see that Margaret Noble was not an easy person to work with or live around. Rabindranath Tagore would one day remark of her, "When it was not possible to agree with her, it was impossible to work with her."[13] This indirectly reflects something very positive about her relationship with Joe and Joe's ability to get along with others.

For now, however, Margaret Noble was still a devotee called *Margot* by the swami and Joe, and they were still in London, having great fun going to his classes and talking for hours on the bold new ideas that had come into their lives through Swami Vivekananda and Vedanta.

Then there were the Galsworthys, who also came to the swami's classes. They are of interest here because they provided Swami Vivekananda with an indication of Joe's diplomatic skills. Apparently at some point between April and mid-summer of 1896, some sort of misunderstanding developed between the Galsworthys and Vivekananda. Then on July 6, 1896, Swamiji, in a letter to Frank Leggett, mentioned: "The Galsworthys have been very very kind. Joe brought them round splendidly. I simply admire Joe in her tact and quiet way. She is a

feminine statesman or woman. She can wield a kingdom. I have seldom seen such strong yet good common sense in a human being."[14]

And that would always be Joe's way with the world. She would manage a good deal that went on around her, but always from a quiet backseat vantage point. She would smooth down and turn around ruffled egos and hurt feelings, and always in a very polished, understated way. Joe seems to have had the ability to find what she saw was needed without having to shout at anybody to move out of her way. This asset was to be of great service to Swami Vivekananda.

All in all, Vivekananda's London season was grand and full of hope, and there was a feeling on his part of having established a strong center of work there. He himself summed up the season in this same letter to Frank Leggett of July 6, 1896, which Joe was later to consider Swamiji's great legacy to her niece Frances Leggett. He wrote:

Well, the work is growing silently yet surely in England. Almost every other man or woman came to me and talked about the work. This British Empire with all its drawbacks is the greatest machine that ever existed for the dissemination of ideas. I mean to put my ideas in the centre of this machine and they will spread all over the world. Of course, all great work is slow, and the difficulties are too many, especially as we Hindus are the conquered race. Yet, that is the very reason why it is bound to work, for spiritual ideals have always come from the downtrodden. Jews overwhelmed the Roman Empire with their spiritual ideals. You will be pleased to know that I am also learning my lessons every day in patience and, above all, in sympathy. I think I am beginning to see the Divine, even inside the high and mighty Anglo-Indians. I think I am slowly approaching to that state when I should be able to love the very "Devil" himself, if there were any.

At twenty years of age I was the most unsympathetic, uncompromising fanatic; I would not walk on the footpath on the theatre side of the streets in Calcutta. At thirty-three, I can live in the same house with prostitutes and never would think of saying a word of reproach to them. Is it degenerate? Or is it that I am broadening out into the Universal Love which is the Lord himself? Again, I have heard that if one does not see the evil round him, he cannot do good work -- he lapses into a sort of fatalism. I do not see that. On the other hand, my power of work is immensely increasing and becoming immensely effective. Some days I get into a sort of ecstasy. I feel that I must bless every one, everything, love and embrace everything, and I do see that evil is a delusion. I am in one of these moods now, dear Francis, and am actually shedding tears of joy at the thought of your and Mrs. Leggett's love and kindness to me. I bless the day I was born. I have had so much of kindness and love here, and that Love Infinite that brought me into being has guarded every one of my actions, good or bad, (don't be frightened) for what am I, what was I ever, but a tool in His hand? -- for whose service I have given up everything, my beloved ones, my joys, my life. He is my playful darling, I am His playfellow. There is neither rhyme nor reason in the universe! What reason binds Him? He the playful one is playing these tears and laughters over all parts of the play! Great fun, great fun, as Joe says.

It is a funny world, and the funniest chap you ever saw is He -- the Beloved Infinite! Fun, is it not? Brotherhood or playmatehood -- a school of romping children let out to play in this playground of the world! Isn't it? Whom to praise, whom to blame, it is all His play. They want explanations, but how can you explain Him? He is brainless, nor has He any reason. He is fooling us with little brains and reason, but this time He won't find me napping.

I have learnt a thing or two: Beyond, beyond reason and learning and talking is the feeling, the "Love", the "Beloved". Ay, Sake, fill up the cup and we will be mad.

Yours ever in madness,
Vivekananda[15]

For Joe the spring of 1896 and London and Swami Vivekananda drew to a close sometime in June when she returned to America. She could not have known that it would be almost eighteen months before she would see the swami again. She would, however, have his classes to remember and the occasional lunches she had been able to take him to, and there would be some letters back and forth. As her reminiscences have already indicated, Swami Vivekananda went with the Seviers for a rest in Switzerland after closing out his classes for the summer.

When the swami returned to London in the fall, he stayed for two to three weeks with Henrietta Muller in a rented house in Wimbledon, where Swami Abhedananda was also staying, having come from India to help with the Vedanta work.

Frank and Betty Leggett had spent two weeks of June at Camp Percy, the scene just one year ago of their engagement; and for the rest of the summer Betty stayed at Ridgely, where Joe joined her, Frank coming up from New York City for long weekends. In the fall it was determined that Frank's city apartment at the Renaissance was too small for the family. Hollister had been put to school in New York and was living at home; Alberta would be coming back to the States in a year or so; and there was to be a new Leggett -- a tiny one, to be born in late November. So they moved back to Betty's larger place at 21 West Thirty-fourth Street, which had been renovated and redecorated since the Sturges family had lived there.

[1] Late and Soon, p. 102.
[2] New Disc. 4:163.
[3] New Disc.
[4] Friends Coll., E.T. Sturdy to Josephine Macleod, Decem ber 16, 1896.
[5] Rems., p. 231.
[6] New Disc. 4:141.
[7] New Disc.
[8] New Disc, p. 91.
[9] Life II, p. 96.
[10] New Disc. 4:162-63, 165.
[11] Life and Gospel, p. 94.
[12] Dedicated, p. 45.
[13] SNRV, p. 244.
[14] Letters Si pp. 295-96.
[15] Letters Si. , pp. 295-97; Late and Soon, p. 106.

It may have been at this time that Frank established for Joe some kind of allowance system, or a fund from which she was able to draw money when she needed it. There are many stories about Joe and wealth. The main one that stands out is that she always kept some money in a little bag which hung around her neck. Katherine Whitmarsh, whose father worked closely with Frank Leggett, has stated that Frank gave to Joe a nice allowance for life, and that she spent very little on herself, giving most of it away[1]. Frances Leggett also discussed her Aunt Joe's attitude toward money, which was influenced by her whole way of thinking after having met Vivekananda. She wrote:

Frank ... had great faith in Joe -- partly because she was economical. She never asked him for money. "Don't you want more?" he would sometimes ask her, and she always said she had plenty; he was quite struck by it. "I ought to have married you, Joe," he is supposed to have said once. If he did, it was because of her taste for simplicity. She didn't want frivolous things after she met the Swami[2].

Joe is now seen in her predominant mood -- the mood of life, fixed as it were, after she met Swami Vivekananda. From that time her life *was* Vivekananda. His thoughts, his moods, his teachings became her constant companions and gradually her constant meditation.

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[1] Whitmarsh, 1979.

[2] Late and Soon, pp. 111-12.

VEDANTA AND CHRIST

On June 27, 1896, Swami Saradananda and J. J. Good-win had set sail from England for the United States. The plan had been that the swami would first lecture and teach at the summer Green Acre Conference, as Swami Vivekananda had done in the summer of 1894, and that he would then go on to New York to carry on the work there. He was immediately received with enthusiasm and began classes on raja, karma, and bhakti yogas. Among the participants at Green Acre that summer were Sara Bull, Ellen Waldo, Ruth Ellis, and Dr. Wight.

Sara Bull had been placed in charge of the New York work by Swami Vivekananda and now in the summer of 1896 she decided it needed to be revamped. Basically what she wanted was a permanent headquarters there, with Swami Saradananda in charge, and J. J. Goodwin as his assistant. She foresaw a library, visiting scholars of standing, and subscriptions of support[1].

However, J. J. Goodwin was also needed that fall in London to take down and transcribe Swami Vivekananda's lectures. Sara did not want to send Swami Saradananda to New York without Goodwin at his side, because that would have left the present regime (meaning Ellen Waldo) in charge. The only solution was to keep Swami Saradananda in Cambridge until Goodwin's return[2]. On September 8, Goodwin approached Frank Leggett about supporting the revamping work, and Frank asked him to put the outcome of their conversation in writing[3].

Sara Bull also wrote to the Leggetts and Joe and enclosed a flyer detailing her plans. In response, Joe expressed the general support of her family. Writing on September 17, she stated:

I doubt if the work progresses in the right way in New York without the Swami Vivekananda, and should consider the Cambridge element more congenial & fruitful soil, as it holds less to the necessity of Christianity as a saving power. Our Swami's great exposition of Vedanta Philosophy always favored rather than denied the mission of Christ, and left Christians *better* Christians, and this is what essentially appealed to Mr. Leggett, and in fact to all of us. We have discussed this a good deal of late, and feel that it is a spiritual awakening that is required, as Swami & Christ teach -- rather than an undermining of what is already possessed. It would be more satisfactory to talk to you, and I hope we shall have the privilege soon.

We will gladly become members of your Cambridge Organization[4].

By the time Joe wrote this letter, however, two things had already happened which spelled the undoing of Sara Bull's plans for the New York work. First, Swami Vivekananda, travelling in Switzerland, had received her packet of circulars, which praised Swami Saradananda and stated that he was teaching at Green Acre "through the kind permission of E. T. Sturdy." Swami Vivekananda's immediate reaction is depicted clearly in a postscript of a letter he wrote to her on August 23, a part of which reads: "Who is Sturdy or anybody else to *permit* a sannyasin?... It was an insult to Sturdy and would have proved serious for my work if it had reached India. Fortunately I tore all those notices to pieces and threw them in the gutter...."[5]

Second, J. J. Goodwin, on retreat with Swami Saradananda, suddenly backed away from the whole plan, expressing in a letter to Sara Bull his inability to get along with the swami.[6]

But the real death blow came on October 8 when Swami Vivekananda wrote to Ellen Waldo and granted authority to her in a powerful letter in which he stated clearly: "Why do you not begin to teach? Begin boldly. Mother will give you all power -- thousands will come to you. Plunge in.... I will begin from today sending out powerful thoughts to you all. Make a blaze, make a blaze."[7] And that was that. Ellen Waldo did begin lecturing and conducting classes, and with considerable success, receiving warm response from those who attended her talks[8].

Aside from a brief stay in New York to lecture at the Brooklyn Ethical Association on October 24, Swami Saradananda spent the fall months in Cambridge and Boston, a guest of Sara Bull.

[1] New Disc. 4:317-20.[2] New Disc, p. 328.[3] New Disc, p. 326.[4] Friends Coll., September 17, 1896.[5] New Disc. 4:327.[6] New Disc , p. 331.[7] New Disc, p. 337.
[8] New Disc, pp 341-42 29.

BLESSED IS THE CHEERFUL JOE

At the same time Vivekananda was sending those powerful thoughts to Ellen Waldo, he was opening his own fall season of work in London. On October 7 he commuted from Wimbledon to open classes. That evening he stayed with Captain and Charlotte Sevier and wrote a letter to Joe. Bringing her up to date on his work, making her a part of it, he gave her a true treasury of blessings. He wrote:

Once more in London, dear Joe Joe, and the classes have begun already. Instinctively I looked about for one familiar face which never had a line of discouragement, never changed, but was always helpful, cheerful, and strengthening -- and my mind conjured up that face before me, in spite of a few thousand miles of space. For what is space in the realm of spirit? Well, you're gone to your home of rest and peace. For me, ever-increasing mad work; yet I have your blessings with me always, have I not? My natural tendency is to go into a cave and be quiet, but a fate behind pushes me forward and I go. Whoever could resist fate?

Why did not Christ say in the Sermon on the Mount, "Blessed are they that are always cheerful and always hopeful for they have already the kingdom of heaven"? I am sure, He must have said it, He with the sorrows of a whole world in His heart, He who likened the saintly soul with the child -- but it was not noted down; of a thousand things they noted down only one, I mean, remembered.

Most of our friends came -- one of the Galsworthys too -- i.e. the married daughter. Mrs. Galsworthy could not come today; it was very short notice. We have a hall now, a pretty big one holding about 200 or more. There is a big corner which will be fitted up as the Library. I have another man [Swami Abhedananda] from India now to help.

I enjoyed Switzerland immensely, also Germany. Prof. Deussen was very kind -- we came together to London and had great *fun* here. Prof. Max Muller is very, very friendly too. In all, the English work is becoming *solid* -- and respectable too, seeing that great scholars are sympathising. Probably I go to India this winter with some English friends. So far about my own sweet self.

Now what about the holy family? Everything is going on first-rate, I am sure. You must have heard of Fox by this time. I am afraid I rather made him dejected the day before he sailed by telling him that he could not marry Mabel [a cousin of Joe and Betty] until he began to earn a good deal of money! Is Mabel with you now? Give her my love. Also give me your present address.

How is Mother? Frankincense, same solid sterling gold as ever, I am sure. Alberta, working at her music and languages, laughing a good deal and eating a good many apples as usual? By the by, I now live mostly on fruits and nuts. They seem to agree with me well. If ever the old doctor, with "land" up somewhere, comes to see you, you may confide to him this secret. I have lost a good deal of my fat. But on days I lecture, I have to go on solid food. How is Hollis? I never saw a sweeter boy -- may all blessings ever attend him through life.

I hear your friend Cola is lecturing on Zoroastrian philosophy -- surely the stars are not smiling on him. What about your Miss Andreas [Andrews?] and our Yogananda? What news about the brotherhood of the ZZZ's and our Mrs. (forgotten!)? I hear that half a shipload of Hindus and Buddhists and Mohammedans and Brotherhoods and what not have entered the U.S., and another cargo of Mahatma-seekers, evangelists etc. have entered India! Good. India and the U.S. seem to be two countries for religious enterprise. Have a care, Joe; the heathen corruption is dreadful. I met Madam Sterling in the street today. She does not come any more for my lectures, good for her. Too much of philosophy is not good. Do you remember that lady who used to come to every meeting too late to hear a word but button-holed me immediately after and kept me talking, till a battle of Waterloo would be raging in my internal economy through hunger? She came. They are all coming and more. That is cheering.

It is getting late in the night. So goodnight, Joe. (Is strict etiquette to be followed in New York too?) And Lord bless you ever and ever.

"Man's all-wise maker, wishing to create a faultless form whose matchless symmetry should far transcend creation's choicest works, did call together by his mighty will, and garner up in his eternal mind, a bright assemblage of all lovely things, and then, as in a picture, fashioned them into one perfect and ideal form. Such the divine, the wondrous prototype whence her fair shape was moulded into being." (*Shankuntalam* by Kalidasa, translated by Monier Williams.)
That is you, Joe Joe; only I would add, the same the creator did with all purity and nobility and other qualities and then Joe was made.

Ever yours, with love and blessings,
Vivekananda

P.S. Mrs. and Mr. Sevier in whose house (flat) I am writing now, send their kindest regards.[1]

Swami Vivekananda's opening class or reception was held at 39 Victoria Street, in rooms arranged for by E. T. Sturdy. Sturdy wrote to each guarantor of the swami's fall arrangements to describe the rooms and the costs. Apparently Joe was one of the guarantors as she received from Sturdy a letter detailing 39 Victoria Street[2]. But within a week or so, Swamis Vivekananda and Abhedananda had again moved, and this time to 14 Greycoat Gardens. When J. J. Goodwin arrived in London on October 20, he moved in with them[3]. Class talks, however, were held at 39 Victoria Street.

Only on October 7 had Goodwin informed Mary Phillips that Swami Saradananda would not be coming to New York in November. On that same day he himself had left on the *Teutonic* for London. In November, in a letter to Joe, Goodwin flaunted a bit of the backlash which he was receiving from the New York devotees. He told her: "I am getting letters of the most violent condemnation and denunciation from N.Y. almost daily, but the Swami has supported me in the arrangement by which Saradananda will work in Boston through the winter, and to tell you the truth, N.Y.'s displeasure falls rather flat[4]."

Goodwin's frequent letters to Joe MacLeod often show him opening up and confiding in her. Apparently she had shared with him a letter Swamiji had written to Frank Leggett -- probably the July 6, 1896 one -- in which the swami was writing from an obviously exultant mood, glowing from his own high state of mind. Goodwin wrote to Joe on October 4 expressing his gratitude for her having shared the letter. Then he asked: "Shall I shock you very much if I tell you that the Swami takes the place of Christ to me? I think not, for you will understand what I mean,"[5] -- showing that he and Joe had had a good deal of direct communication in their dealings with each other.

By November 11 Swami Vivekananda had decided to return to India by way of Europe rather than by way of America. According to Marie Louise Burke, he had at one time considered the American route, "partly to prevent the increasingly difficult Miss Muller from travelling with him[6]." Swamiji had invited the Seviers to accompany him, and he also wanted Goodwin to go. He and the Seviers were to leave London on December 16 and go to Rome; J. J. Goodwin was to join them there and they were to sail from Naples for India on December 30[7].

The swami wanted very much to establish two monasteries in India: one in Calcutta and one in Madras, "to train up young preachers[8]." Writing to Alasinga Perumal in Madras on November 20, he stated that the Seviers would establish a place in Almora in the Himalayas, intended to be the swami's Himalayan Centre as well as a place for Western disciples to live monastic lives. "We will begin work with these three centres;" he wrote, "and later on, we will get to Bombay and Allahabad. And from these points, if the Lord is pleased, we will invade not only India, but send over bands of preachers to every country in the world...." He concluded his letter by writing, "You must not forget that my interests are *international* and not Indian alone."[9]

Swamiji's wishes in this connection were to become the basis of Joe MacLeod's future work for him, remembering always that he was not the property of any nation on earth.

In the meantime, Joe, under the impression that his return to India would be via New York, invited him to again be a guest of the Leggetts. On December 3, he wrote to her:

Dear Joe,

Many, many thanks, dear Joe Joe, for your kind invitation; but the Dear God has disposed it this way, viz I am to start for India on the 16th with Captain and Mrs. Sevier and Mr. Goodwin. The Seviers and myself take steamer at Naples. And as there will be four days at Rome, I will look in to say good-bye to Alberta.

Things are in a "hum" here just now; the big hall for the class, 39 Victoria, is full and yet more are coming.

Well, the good old country now calls me; I must go. So good-bye to all projects of visiting Russia this April.

I just set things a-going a little in India and am off again for the ever beautiful U.S. and England etc.

So very kind of you to send Mabel's letter -- good news indeed. Only I am a little sorry for poor Fox. However, Mabel escaped him, that is better.

You did not write anything about how things are going on in New York. I hope it is all well there. Poor Cola! is he able now to make a living?

The coming of Goodwin was very opportune, as it captured the lectures here which are being published in a periodical form. Already there have been subscribers enough to cover the expenses.

Three lectures next week, and my London work is finished for this season. Of course, everybody here thinks it foolish to give it up just now the "boom" is on, but the Dear Lord says, "Start for Old India". I obey.

To Frankincense, to Mother, to Hollister and everyone else my eternal love and blessings, and with the same for you,

Yours ever sincerely,
Vivekananda[10]

[1] CW6:373-76.
[2] Friends Coll., October 3, 1896.
[3] New Disc. 4:351
[4] Ibid., p. 483.
[5] New Disc, pp. 333-34.
[6] New Disc, p. 483.
[7] Ibid., p. 486.
[8] New Disc, p. 485. 37.
[9] CW5:124-25.
[10] CW8:392-93.

SPIRITUAL CHILD

Had the swami visited the Leggetts in America, he would have seen the newest one, tiny Frances Howard Leggett, born November 30, 1896, at 21 West Thirty-fourth Street. Hollister Sturges later remembered that it had snowed hard that day and that it had been he who ran through the streets to fetch the doctor[1]. A cable was sent to Alberta Sturges who was in Rome: "Lovely girl." Years later Joe recalled in a letter to her niece Frances, who had asked about the details of her own birth:

What I most vividly recollect is that we did not tell your father of the impending event that morning because he had lost his first wife so soon after the birth of her child. He arrived home at about 5:30 to find your mother comfortably settled and you washed and dressed to receive your father as a well-bred child should be. We only feared he would come home before all was settled.

I think the exact hour of your birth was 3 o'clock. But *I* feel the real diagnosis foretelling your future was from an old Brahmin priest in a little village [in India] that I reached after a six hour drive in a bullock cart from Madras. You were then two years old and when he held my written question in his hand (he knew no English) he said: "France Lig will live to the age of 73 and have a remarkable education and international reputation."[2]

Frances Leggett outlived the Brahmin priest's prophecy by eight years, but, as will be seen, she did have a rather remarkable education, and her book, *Late and Soon*, has to some extent earned her an international reputation.

Swami Vivekananda was immediately notified of the baby's birth, and on December 13 he wrote to Frank Leggett:

So Gopala [a name of the Lord] has taken the female form! It is fit that it should be so, the time and place considering. May all blessings follow her through life. She was keenly desired and prayed for and she comes as a blessing to you and your wife for life I have not the least doubt. I only wish I could come to America now if only to fulfill the form -- "the sages of the East bringing presents to the Western baby." But the heart is there with all prayers and blessings and the mind is more powerful than the body[3].

Joe also sought the advice of E. T. Sturdy about giving the baby girl a Sanskrit name. On December 16, the same day Swami Vivekananda left London, Sturdy wrote to her, giving a list of possible Sanskrit names, a few wise words on child-rearing, and the following message for her little niece: *Swas te panthanah pantu*- "May thy path (through life) be blessed." Sturdy's list of names included *Vivekavati*, which he said was "coined but perfectly correct" and meaning *she who has discrimination*.[4]

Joe later told her niece, "I wanted you named Lotus, but you were named Frances Howard." According to Frances Leggett, her Aunt Joe thought of her as the spiritual child of Swami Vivekananda who had been a witness at her parents' wedding and, as mentioned previously, Joe thought of his great letter to her father, written July 6, 1896, as her real inheritance.[5]

Joe also once told Frances that she had been born in the same room in which Dora Rothlesberger had had her vision of Sri Ramakrishna, adding, "So you see, Darling, you were heralded by Angels!"[6]

Alberta Sturges, now nineteen years old, was, as mentioned, living in Rome and staying with a Miss Edwards, well known in English social circles and a friend of Joe. Joe gave to Charlotte Sevier the address where Alberta was staying so that the swami's party could contact her while in Rome. Connections were made, and Alberta and Miss Edwards were able to join Swamiji and the Seviers on several excursions in and about Rome[7]. Joe's reminiscences state:

Swamiji's knowledge was prodigious. Once when my niece, Alberta Sturges, later Lady Sandwich, was with him in Rome, showing him the sights, she was amazed at his knowledge of where the great monuments were. And when she went to St. Peter's with him, she was still more amazed to see him so reverential to the symbols of the Roman Church -- to all the jewels, all the beautiful draperies, put upon the saints. She said, "Swami, you don't believe in a

Personal God; why do you honour this so much?" He answered, "But, Alberta, if you do believe in a Personal God, surely you give it your best."[8]

Miss Edwards also expressed her wonder at his knowledge of Roman history, as she accompanied him in the Eternal City,[9] and later Charlotte Sevier wrote about their visit to Rome in an article entitled "Round about Rome with Swami Vivekananda," which was published in the 1910 *Prabuddha Bharata*.

On December 30 Swamiji, the Seviers, and Goodwin sailed from Naples on the *Prinz Regent Luitpold*. They reached Colombo on January 15, 1897 and from this point Swami Vivekananda emerged as a hero saint for all of India. Joe's reminiscences state it so simply:

That autumn he went from [Italy] to India with Mr. and Mrs. Sevier and Mr. J. J. Goodwin, where a great ovation awaited him by the entire nation. This can be read about in the discourses called "Lectures from Colombo to Almora."[10]

With Vivekananda's return to India, a new time of quiet, a new time of waiting began for Joe. Separated from Swamiji by ten thousand miles, she waited patiently, in silence, not writing, not bothering him. And in this quiet time she also went about managing things as was her liking (and Betty's), helping the family in whatever way was needed.

[1] Late and Soon, p. 105.
[2] Late and Soon
[3] CW6:386-87.
[4] Friends Coll.
[5] Late and Soon, p. 106.
[6] Early Draft Late and Soon, p. 21.
[7] Life II, p. 154.
[8] Rems. , p . 231.
[9] Comp. Biog. II, p. 852.
[10] Rems., p. 231.

TRINITY AND TRAINING (THE PROPHET'S GLORY) (Part One)

"These yanks can do anything!"
--Swami Vivekananda, speaking of
Josephine MacLeod and Sara Bull

THE PROPHET'S GLORY

Now came for Josephine MacLeod an intense time of separation from the person she considered "the Prophet." She was living with Frank and Betty, helping to care for Babe (Frances -- or France, as she was to be called), trying to lead her usual life, but all the while, immersing her mind in thoughts of Vivekananda and Vedanta.

Two things gave her some support during this period. First, Swami Saradananda arrived in New York to settle down and teach. John Fox escorted him there in January of 1897, and the swami began giving classes and lectures at 509 Fifth Avenue.[1] His immediate popularity brought overflow crowds. Joe attended at least some of his talks; and though she very much enjoyed the swami, she also tended to drop off to sleep quickly. Once this happened while she was sitting in the front row at his lecture. Afterwards, while shaking hands, he smiled at her and asked, "Did you sleep well?" Both burst out laughing.[2]

The second support for Joe during this period of separation from Swami Vivekananda was J. J. Goodwin, who wrote often to her and Sara Bull from India, filling his letters with vivid descriptions of Swamiji. His early 1897 letters, reporting the tremendous ovation and glory heaped upon Vivekananda by multitudes wherever he went, would have come as no surprise to one who called him the Prophet. Still, Joe must have felt a thrill and a closeness to Swamiji to read the following, written by Goodwin on March 16, 1897 from Darjeeling. Addressing her as Dear Miss MacLeod, he wrote:

All this time we have been travelling, and the Swami has given so many speeches and lectures that all my time has gone in writing up what he has said. From Colombo to Calcutta his journey was a series of triumphs. In Ramnad he received a Royal welcome, the Rajah setting the example by prostrating himself in the public road before the whole population; from Madura to Madras (by rail) two nights running there were crowds at every station at which the train stopped. At Trichinopoly at 3 in the morning there were over 1000 people, and they literally dragged the Swami from his sleeping bunk to say a few words to them.... As I told you he has given a great number of speeches, and I am now busy preparing these for publication in book form -- a record from Colombo to Calcutta. I shall, of course, send you copies -- I think in about a month's time.[3]

Goodwin then went on to give Joe bad news: that the journey had been too much for Swamiji; that the people had been "killing him with kindness"; and that his doctor had diagnosed his condition as diabetes. Goodwin also wrote that he needed "absolute brain rest and strict attention to diet for six months." Then he stated:

He is regarded here as an Avatar. You will remember that Krishna said -- When virtue subsides and immorality prevails I come again to save the world. The Swami is regarded everywhere as one of these appearances, or Avatar. And I think perfectly justly. He could not do the work he is doing and as he is doing it otherwise....[4]

On January 31 Goodwin had sent Sara Bull a flower garland which the Raja of Ramnad had presented to Swami Vivekananda.[5]

It is very likely that Sara Bull, who frequently had occasion to write to and hear from Swamiji, mentioned to him, sometime in the spring of 1897, that she and Joe were thinking of going to India. On May 5, writing to Sara, the swami added in a postscript: "So glad to know that you and Miss MacLeod intend coming to India. You are very very welcome. I also have a chance to go to Europe as I cannot do any work here for want of funds. It is better I go to England where I have got some now and more chance."[6]

And on May 18, 1897, Goodwin, writing to Joe, mentioned that Swamiji had told him of their possible trip to India. Goodwin offered his own encouragement and suggested going to India in the fall, so they could take part in Swamiji's "autumn campaign." Goodwin then stated that the swami was wondering why Joe and Mr. Leggett never wrote to him.[7]

l. New Disc. 4:342-45.
2. Swami Aseshananda, Glimpses of a Great Soul: A Portrait of Swami Saradananda [here after Glimpses,, p. 22.]
3 Friends Coll.
4 Friends Coll.
5 Early Draft Late and Soon, p. 26.
6 PB, November 1978, p. 469.
7 Friends Coll.

LOVE INDIA

Joe's reminiscences continue:
I never wrote to Swami after he went to India, waiting to hear from him. Finally I had a letter, "Why don't you write?" Then I sent back, "Shall I come to India?" And his answer was, "Yes, come, if you want filth and degradation and poverty and many loin cloths talking religion. Don't come if you want anything else. We cannot bear one more criticism." Naturally I went over by the first ship;...[1]
Actually it was not the *first* ship. It was to be several months more before she and Sara Bull left for India, accompanied by Swami Saradananda. In the meantime, there was much more correspondence about it. On July 10, Swami Vivekananda wrote to her from Almora, his words giving clues as to what she had written to him about. He wrote:

My Dear Joe Joe,

I am glad to learn that you have at last found out that I have time to read your letters.
I have taken to the Himalayas, tired of lecturing and orating. I am so sorry the doctors would not allow my going over with the Raja of Khetri to England, and that has made Sturdy mad.
The Seviers are at Simla and Miss Muller here in Almora.
The plague has subsided, but the famine is still here, and as it looks (on account of no rain as yet), it may wear yet a terrible aspect.
I am very busy from here directing work by my boys in some of the famine districts.
Do come by all means, only you must remember this. The Europeans and the Hindus (called "Natives" by the Europeans) live as oil and water. Mixing with Natives is damning to the Europeans.
There are no good hotels to speak of even at the capitals. You will have to travel with a number of servants about you (cost cheaper than hotels). You will have to bear with people who wear only a loin cloth; you will see me with only a loin cloth about me. Dirt and filth everywhere, and brown people. But you will have plenty of men to talk to you philosophy. If you mix with the English much here, you will have more comforts but see nothing of the Hindus as they are. Possibly I will not be able to eat with you, but I promise that I will travel to good many places with you and do everything in my power to make your journey pleasant. These are what you expect: if anything good comes, so much the better. Perhaps Mary Hale may come over with you. There is a young lady, Miss Campbell, Orchard Lake, Orchard Island, Michigan, who is a great worshipper of Krishna and lives alone in that Island, fasting and praying. She will give anything to be able to see India once, but she is awfully poor. If you bring her with you, I will anyhow manage to pay her expenses. If Mrs. Bull brings old Landsberg with her, that will be saving that fool's life as it were.
Most probably I may accompany you back to America. Kiss Hollister for me and the baby. My love to Alberta, to the Leggetts, and to Mabel. What is Fox doing? Give him my love when you see him. To Mrs. Bull and S. Saradananda my love. I am as strong as ever, but it all depends upon leading a quiet life ever afterwards. No hurly-burly any more.
I had a great mind to go to Tibet this year, but they would not allow me, as the road is dreadfully fatiguing. However, I content myself with galloping hard over precipices on mountain ponies. (This is more exciting than your bicycle even, although I had an experience of that at Wimbledon.) Miles and miles of uphill and miles and miles of downhill, the road a few feet broad hanging over sheer precipices several thousand feet deep below.

Ever yours in the Lord,
Vivekananda

PS The best time to come is to arrive in India by October or beginning of November. December, January and February you see things all over, and then start by the end of February. From March it begins to get hot. Southern India is *always hot*. V.[2]

Three weeks later Swamiji wrote to Margaret Noble in England, in reply to her own letters about coming to India: "Let me tell you frankly that I am now convinced that you have a great future in the work for India. What was wanted was not a man, but a woman; a real lioness, to work for the Indians, women specially."[3]

He then warned Margaret Noble that she would have to think well before plunging in, and that she would have to stand on her feet and not be under the wings of "Miss Muller or anybody else." Then he mentioned: "I learn from America, two friends of mine, Mrs. Ole Bull of Boston and Miss MacLeod, are coming on a visit to India this autumn. Miss MacLeod you already know in London, that Paris-dressed young American lady; Mrs. Ole Bull is about fifty and has been a kind friend to me in America." He then suggested that she join their party to "while away the tedium of the journey."[4] Margaret Noble travelled to India by herself however.

On August 19 Swamiji wrote to Sara Bull, giving her a similar warning about the problems involved in coming to India. He began by saying that he had heard from Joe that they wished to visit India and that he would be glad to see them but must warn her that "India [was] the dirtiest and unhealthiest hole in the world, with scarcely any European comforts except in the big capitals...." He told her that no European or American would be of any service in India, and that it would be hard for any Westerner to bear the climate. Then he added: "Women have no place in men's society here, and she can do good only among her own sex.... With all these, if anybody wants to try, she is welcome.... You ought to think that you are starting for the interior of Africa, and if you meet anything better, that will be unexpected."[5]

One other letter from Vivekananda to Joe which is supposed to have been written that summer (August 11, 1897) from the Math, may actually belong to a later period. At this time the swami was at either Almora or Ambala. He wrote:

Dear Joe,

> ... Well, the work of the Mother will not suffer; because it has been built and up to date maintained upon truth, sincerity, and purity. Absolute sincerity has been its watchword.
> Yours with all love,Vivekananda[6]

September 30, 1897 from Kashmir, the swami wrote to Joe. His formal salutation, *My Dear Miss MacLeod*, was surely due only to the fact that he was writing on a postcard. He wrote:

> Come soon if you intend to come really. From November to the middle of February India is cool; after that it is hot. You will be able to see all you want within that time, but to see all takes years.
> I am in a hurry; therefore excuse this hasty card. Kindly tender my love to Mrs. Bull and my good wishes and earnest thoughts for Goodwin's[7] speedy recovery. My love to Mother [Betty Leggett], to Alberta, to the baby, to Hollister, and last, not the least, to Franky [Frank Leggett].
>
> Yours in the Lord,
> Vivekananda[8]

Swami Vivekananda, in his July 10 letter to Joe, had mentioned that she should invite Mary Hale to join her and Sara on their journey to India. Joe had recently invited Mary Hale to Ridgely, which she considered "a particularly favored place, Swamiji having given his most eloquent words" there, and she also considered Mary Hale a new friend. Joe did make an effort over the next several months to persuade Mary to join their party on the journey to India, but Mary had her own plan for a trip there and did not go with them.[9]

Due to the serious illness of Sara Bull's granddaughter, Edwina, plans for the trip were very vague. Of course indefinite plans were Joe's backbone. She had thrived on the short notice she and Betty had often been given by William Sturges regarding trans-Atlantic voyages, and had had plenty of practice packing steamer trunks and corralling people for long-distance travel.

Not knowing exactly when she would leave for India did not disturb Joe. Sara also considered herself as going on "a mission" to India, so Joe, taking a backseat, was happy to build her plans around Sara's. As for herself, she wanted to go "just to see India from the standpoint of the Prophet."[10]

In the meantime Swami Abhedananda had arrived in New York in August to take charge of classes at the Vedanta Society of New York[11]. That fall the Leggetts and Joe left Ridgely, settled back into the Thirty-fourth Street house, and began attending his classes and talks. In Swami Abhedananda's diary of this early period of his work in New York he frequently mentioned the Leggetts and Joe, indicating a warm and friendly relationship. At lunch in their home he met Dr. Elmer Gates of Washington D.C. who was involved in psycho-physical experiments to prove the power of mind over matter.[12]

Then all of a sudden everything fell into place: Sara felt comfortable with leaving her family, and plans for sailing to India gelled. On January 10, 1898, Swami Saradananda told Swami Abhedananda that he was returning to India at Swami Vivekananda's call to help with the work there, and that he was sailing in two days with Sara Bull and Joe MacLeod. On the day they left, Swami Abhedananda went to the Leggett house to say good-bye.[13]

Joe's reminiscences continue:

I sailed on the twelfth of January with Mrs. Ole Bull and Swami Saradananda. We stopped in London. Then on to Rome.[14]

According to Swami Saradananda's travel diary, seven days aboard the *Teutonic* were followed by two days in Liverpool and London; two days in Paris (where they saw Sarah Bernhardt at the theatre and also heard the opera singer Madame Emma Calve practising in the next hotel); a day and a half in Rome; two days in Naples; and one day in Brindisi.[15]

Joe's reminiscences continue:

We arrived in Bombay on the twelfth of February where Mr. Alasinga [a disciple of Vivekananda] met us, who wore the vertical red marks of the Vaishnavite sect. [A few months later], when I was sitting with Swami [Vivekananda] on our way to Kashmir, I happened to make the remark, "What a pity that Mr. Alasinga wears those Vaishnavite marks on his forehead!" Instantly Swami turned and said with great sternness, "Hands off! What have you ever done?" I did not know what I had done then. Of course I never answered. Tears came to my eyes and I waited. I learnt later that Mr. Alasinga Perumal was a young Brahmin teaching philosophy in a college in Madras earning 100 rupees a month, supporting his father, mother, wife, and four children, and who had gone from door to door to beg the money to send Vivekananda to the West. Perhaps without him we never would have met Vivekananda. Then one understood the anger with which Swamiji met the slightest attack on Mr. Alasinga.[16]

Many years later, when Joe was interviewed by Romain Rolland about Swami Vivekananda, she related this incident to him. In his diary, Rolland commented that through this experience Joe learned that a man's real self is not how he appears but what he does.[17]

In regard to Joe's unfortunate remarks about the brave Alasinga, Swami Vimalananda wrote in *Samadarshitvam of Swami Vivekananda* about Swami Vivekananda's dealings with his wealthy and advantaged Western devotees who came to India. In 1897 Swami Vimalananda was a young monk who had just joined the Math after Swami Vivekananda's return from the West. Swami Vimalananda wrote: "The treatment which he used to give [the Western devotees] did not in the least differ from that given to his most insignificant Indian disciples. He was kind and loving to all, but his love did not make him blind to their flaws and defects which needed mending."[18]

The Life also has pointed out that Vivekananda "was defiant in the defence of his people's culture, and was ready to beat down mercilessly any other than an open-minded interest in anything connected with his land. He would thunder against the least hint of patronizing and would turn upon the Western disciples if they found fault without justification. He demanded that India be viewed in a spiritual perspective."[19]

Swami Vivekananda himself, writing in his "Memoirs of European Travel," [hereafter *Memoirs*], stated about Alasinga Perumal: "... One rarely finds men like our Alasinga in this world -- one so unselfish, so hard-working, and devoted to his Guru, and such an obedient disciple is indeed very rare on earth."[20]

Joe's reminiscences continue: (*They* in the first sentence refers to Swami Vivekananda's Madrasi devotees, contacted by him ahead of time to go to Bombay and greet her and Sara Bull.)

When we arrived in Bombay they were very keen that we stay there; but we took the first train to Calcutta, and at four o'clock on the second morning following [February 14, 1898], Swamiji met us with a dozen disciples. There were a score of other distinguished Indians with purple and gold and crimson turbans, to whom Mrs. Ole Bull had offered hospitality when they were in America. They covered us with garlands. We were literally enwrapped with flowers. It is always frightening to me to have garlands put on. Mrs. Ole Bull and I went to a hotel and Mr. Mohini Chatterji came and stayed there from five o'clock in the afternoon until ten at night. I happened to remark, "I hope your wife will not be worried?" He answered, "I will explain to mother when I get home." I did not understand what that meant. After I knew Mr. Chatterji well enough, perhaps a year later, I said to him, "What did you mean that first day when you said you would explain to mother?" He answered, "Oh, I never go to my room for the night without first going to my mother's room and confiding to her everything that happened during the day." "But your wife?" I said. "Don't you confide to her?" He answered, "My wife? She gets that relation from her son." Then I realized that fundamental difference between the Indian and our Western civilizations. The Indian civilization is based upon motherhood, and our civilization is based upon wifehood, which makes a tremendous difference.[21]

This Mohini Chatterji was the same Mohini Chatterji whose translation of the *Bhagavad Gita* with cross-references to the Bible, Joe MacLeod regarded all her life as having prepared her to recognize truth when she heard it. Sara Bull had known him for some years, and regarded him also as the one who had introduced her to Vedanta.[22]

By the time Sara Bull and Joe arrived in Calcutta, Margaret Noble was already there, having arrived on January 28. Swami Vivekananda himself having spent several months travelling, had returned to Calcutta in late January in order to make absolutely firm the Vedanta movement so that it could continue with or without him. The Alambazar Math, home of his brother monastics since November 1891, had been greatly damaged by an earthquake that had hit June 12, 1897, and the Math had just been shifted on February 13 to Nilambar Mukerji's garden house on the western bank of the Ganges in Belur[23]. Swamiji, then, in order to establish a permanent home for the Ramakrishna Order, had purchased a plot of land at Belur so that eventually the monastery could move there. The cost of the ground was Rs 39,000, which had been donated by Henrietta Muller. Sara Bull also donated a sum so that a shrine could be built and an endowment created.[24]

[1] Rems., p. 232.[2] CW8:408-10[3] Letters SV, p. 363.[4] Letters SV, p. 363.[5] CW6:407-08.[6] CW5:139.[7] The name Goodwin was surely written in error. Sara Bull's granddaughter, Edwina, was very ill.[8] CW8:424.

[9] Friends Coll., July 19, August 30, September 10 and 23, 1897.

[10] Friends Coll., July 19, August 30, September 10 and 23, 1897., Josephine MacLeod to Mary Hale, September 10, 1897.

[11] New Disc. 4:346.[12] Swami Abhedananda, Com plete Works of Swami Abbeda nanda, "Leaves," 10:18-19.[13] Swami Abhedananda, Com plete Works of Swami Abbeda nanda, "Leaves," 10:18-19. , p. 19. 20. [14] Rems., p. 232.[15] Swami Asheshananda, Glimpses, pp. 25-27.[16] Rems., p. 232.[17] Inde, May 16, 1927, p. 205.[18] Swami Vimalananda, "Sama darshitvam of Swami Viveka nanda," VK, August 1963, p. 304; reprinted from VK, Jan-Feb 1923.[19] Life II, p. 323. 26

[20] CW7:334.[21] Rems., pp. 232-33.[22] New Disc. 3:526.[23] Life II, p. 309.[24] Life II, pp. 308-009.

LITTLE COTTAGE ON THE RIVER

At first Joe and Sara stayed at a hotel in Calcutta; but very shortly that changed, as Joe's reminiscences tell:

In a day or two [after arrival] we went up to see Swami at his temporary monastery at Belur, at Nilambar Mukherjee's garden house. During the afternoon Swami said, "I must take you to the new monastery that we are buying." I said, "Oh, but Swami, isn't this big enough?" It was a lovely little villa he had, with perhaps an acre or two of land, a small lake and many flowers. I thought it was big enough for anyone. But he saw things on a different scale. So he took us across little gullies to the place where is now the present monastery.

Mrs. Ole Bull and I, finding this old riverside house empty, said, "Swami, can't we use this house?" "It isn't in order," he answered. "But we'll put it in order," we told him. With that he gave us permission. So we had it all newly whitewashed and went down to the bazaars, bought old mahogany furniture and made a drawing-room half of which was Indian style and half of which was Western style. We had an outside dining room, our bedroom, with an extra room for Sister Nivedita who was our guest until we went to Kashmir. We stayed there quite two months.

It was perhaps the most beautiful time we ever had with Swamiji. He came every morning for early tea which he used to take under the great mango tree. That tree is still in existence. We never allowed them to cut it down, though they were keen to do it. He loved our living at that riverside cottage; and he would bring all those who came to visit him, to see what a charming home we had made of this house he had thought uninhabitable. In the afternoons we used to give tea-parties in front of the house, in full view of the river, where always could be seen loads of boats going up-stream, we receiving as if we were in our own drawing-rooms. Swamiji loved all that intimate use we made of things which they took as a matter of course.[1]

Swami Vivekananda was quite astonished at the capacity Sara and Joe had for taking this simple, ill-kept little hovel and turning it into a charming and warm nest for themselves. Writing to Sister Christine on March 11, 1898, he declared: "... These Yanks can do anything.... After the luxuries of Boston & New York to be quite content and happy in this wretched little house!!"[2]

In *Long Journey Home*, Barbara Foxe has commented on the little cottage arrangement: "What could be more fair? No favoritism was permitted. Vivekananda was much amused, and highly delighted to see the home they had made of a ramshackle house which many had thought was uninhabitable. He was always delighted by the initiative and practicality of Westerners, whom he regarded as 'being living Vedantins' in this respect, because, when something needed to be done, they did not [just] dream about it.... Home-making or monasticism, love or philosophy, whatever good it was that he saw done to its utmost, he saw it as a 'path out of maya' and encouraged it."[3]

In a letter written to Mary Hale on March 2, 1898, Swamiji told her about the house on the river, saying, "... I see them every day, and they are enjoying it immensely *a l'Inde*." He then adds that in a month they will make a trip to Kashmir, he accompanying them as "guide and friend and philosopher, perhaps, if they are willing."[4]

Joe and Sara had stayed in a Europeanized hotel in Calcutta, grand no doubt, and perhaps the finest luxury their kind of money could buy. Still it was the little cottage near Vivekananda that they wanted. He could not have been more pleased. When they invited Margaret Noble to move in with them, he told her, "You will find that little house of Dhira Mata [Sara] like heaven, for it is all love, from beginning to end."[5]

Joe's reminiscences convey like nothing else can the mood of love and warmth that filled that little cottage on the Ganges, and which was so much due to the swami's loving presence with these devotees of whom he was so proud. She writes:

One night there came one of those deluges of rain, like sheets of water. He paced up and down outside our dining room veranda, talking of Krishna and the love of Krishna and the power that

love was in the world. He had a curious quality that when he was a bhakta, a lover, he brushed aside karma and raja and jnana yogas as if they were of no consequence whatever. And when he was a karma-yogi, then he made that the great theme. Or equally so, the jnana. Sometimes, weeks, he would fall in one particular mood utterly disregardful of what he had been just previous to that. He seemed to be filled with an amazing power of concentration; of opening up to the great Cosmic qualities that are all about us. It was probably that power of concentration that kept him so young and so fresh. He never seemed to repeat himself. There would be an incident of very little consequence which would illuminate a whole new passage for him. And he had such a place for us Westerners whom he called "Living Vedantins". He would say, "When you believe a thing is true, you do it, you do not dream about it. That is your power."

It was one rainy night that Swami brought the Ceylonese Buddhist monk, Anagarika Dharmapala, to visit us. Mrs. Ole Bull, Sister Nivedita, and I were so happily housed in this cottage, it gave Swami particular joy to show his guests how simply Western women could settle there and make a real home.[6]

And now began the real time, the true time of the building of love and abiding friendship between Joe and Margaret. For as long as Margaret Noble lived, she would in her letters to Joe refer frequently to this time they had together with Swami Vivekananda -- this Divine Year. Later, when Joe talked to Romain Rolland about Margaret Noble, she told him how she had never had any doubt, when first meeting Margaret in London, that she would become one of Vivekananda's most fervent disciples, and how when she saw Margaret for the first time in India, this spring of 1898, her face had been all puffed up from mosquito bites, but was still radiant with joy.[7]

Swami Vivekananda visited the three women in the little cottage on the Ganges every morning and usually in the afternoon at tea time. He was anxious for them to have an intensive but impartial study of Indian life and culture. He wanted them to perceive India's true richness and still have a clear understanding of her problems. Later, in her *Notes on Some Wanderings with Swami Vivekananda* [hereafter, *Notes on Wanderings*] Margaret Noble (later, Sister Nivedita) wrote about the little cottage:

Within, an unbroken harmony, and without, everything alike beautiful, --- the green stretch of grass, the tall cocoanut palms, the little brown villages in the jungle, and the Nilkantha that built her nest in a tree top beside us, on purpose to bring us the blessings of Shiva. In the morning, the shadows lay behind the house, but in the afternoons we could sit in front, worshipping the Ganges herself, -- great leonine mother! -- and in sight of Dakshineswar.

There came one and another with traditions of the past, and we learnt of the Master's eight years' wanderings; of the name changed from village to village; of the *Nirvikalpa Samadhi* and of that sacred sorrow, too deep for words, or for common sight, that one who loved had alone seen. And there, too, came the Master Himself, with his stories of Uma and Shiva, of Radha and Krishna, and his fragments of song and poetry.[8]

Now also came the names. There was Dhira Mata, meaning steady mother. It was the swami's name for Sara Bull, whom he regarded as a mother, and whom in Barbara Foxe's words was "a quietly faithful mother figure to Margaret and practically everybody else."[9]

And there was Jaya. It is known that by March 17, Joe had come to be called Jaya by Swamiji[10], a name meaning victorious one. Margaret's *Notes on Wanderings*, with its frequent references to "the one called Jaya" makes clear that he, at least in person, did sometimes address Joe as Jaya. However, in published letters he always addressed her as Joe or Joe Joe. Swami Gambhirananda, writing in his biography of Sri Sarada Devi, also states that Swami Vivekananda called Joe and Betty Jaya and Vijaya, respectively.[11]

And then came Yum or Yum-Yum. This was Margaret's name for Joe, and was the name she would most frequently use in addressing her beloved friend. Yum-Yum is the name of a Tibetan goddess of energy, and it has also been said that this name was given to her by both Swami Vivekananda and Margaret[12]. Marie Louise Burke, however, has stated that the name Yum-Yum was "no doubt after the chief of the three little maids in Gilbert and Sullivan's *The*

Mikado [which had opened in 1895], the three little maids in this case being Joe, Sara, and Margaret, between whom, during their Indian travels, a deep, unbreakable bond had grown."[13]

It is amazing to read about all the many, many events which took place for these three women in the next twelve months. Perhaps a single day they lived through would be held as the high point in the life of an ordinary devotee. Some of the things that happened that year were funny; many of them were sacred and held with greatest care in the memories of those who lived them; all were imbued with their beloved swami. Biographers of Margaret Noble have noted that she alone of the three was considered the "worker," the one on whom Swami Vivekananda placed his greatest hopes and to whom he gave his deepest training. The swami knew that Joe and Sara would help him with whatever material means they could to carry out his plans in shaping and molding the Ramakrishna Order, but they would eventually return to the West and their homes, whereas Margaret ("Margot") was there to stay[14]. Yet it was to all three of them -- the "Trinity," as he called them -- that the swami came daily at sunrise, sometimes alone and sometimes with brother monks[15].

Just two weeks after Joe and Sara's arrival in Calcutta, the celebration of Sri Ramakrishna's birthday occurred, and it is said that a unique feature of the celebration was the participation in it of four Western disciples of Vivekananda: Henrietta Muller, Sara Bull, Josephine MacLeod, and Margaret Noble[16]. But that was not the only unique feature. The annual celebration of the birth anniversary of their Master had always been held at the Dakshineswar Kali Temple, where Sri Ramakrishna had lived for thirty years. This year, 1898, Kali Temple authorities looked with disdain at the Western devotees associated with Vivekananda, and said, "Foreigners will defile the Kali Temple." So in 1898 the celebration had to be held at Radha Ramanji Thakurbari of Purnachandra Daw situated on the Ganges, just upriver from the site of the new Math grounds. The new grounds were too broken up with construction, or the celebration would have been held there.[17]

[1] Rems., pp. 233-34.
[2] Life II, p. 310.
[3] Long Journey, pp. 38-39.
[4] Letters SV, p. 376.
[5] SNRV, p. 33.
[6] Rems., p. 234.
[7] Inde, May 13 , 1927, p. 195.
[8] CWSN 1:278.
[9] Long Journey, p. 38.
[10] CWSN l:281.
[11] Swami Gambhirananda, Holy Mother, Sbri Sarada Devi, p. 392.
[12] Dedicated, p. 161 fn.
[13] New Disc. 5:6.
[14] SNRV, p. 40.
[15] SNRV, p. 39.
[16] Comp. Biog. II, p. 1046.
[17] Life 11, pp. 317-18.

HOLY MOTHER

It was at this celebration that the women met for the first time Gopal's mother (Gopaler-ma), one of the most revered of Sri Ramakrishna's women disciples. Sister Nivedita wrote about it: A sweet American lady was the first of us to discover Gopal's mother, and I was taken by her to be blessed and kissed. The "kiss" consists of two fingers placed gently under one's chin, and Gopal's mother has a touch as light as down! Though we had not a word in common, her wealth of beautiful feeling put us in touch at once, and without an effort at enquiry she took our hands in hers, and led us away into a screened building where the high caste women from the neighbouring village had taken up a post of observation.

Friendliness and pleasure greeted us here once more, and no language was necessary to express the readiness of these Eastern women to meet lovingly and trustfully half-way.... Let the occasion be religious, and all barriers be broken down. High and low, men and women, kindred and alien, all are one, because all realize so intensely, like Gopal's Mother, the common devotion that has drawn them together.[1]

The next major event that occurred for the Trinity, came on March 17, when the women met Sri Sarada Devi, known as the Holy Mother, spiritual consort of Sri Ramakrishna. Since his passing in 1886, the Mother had assumed his spiritual ministry. Had the Holy Mother not given her blessing to his journeying to the West in 1893, Swami Vivekananda would have remained in India, and these women would not have known him at all.

Margaret Noble wrote in *Notes on Wanderings*: "One day, early in the cottage life, the Swami took Dhira Mata, and her whose name was Jaya, to be received for the first time by Sarada Devi, who had come from her village home to Calcutta at his call. Thence they brought back with them for a few hours a guest to whom the memory of that day makes one of life's great festivals. Never can she forget the fragrance of the Ganges, nor the long talk with the Master, nor the service Jaya had done that morning by winning the most orthodox of Hindu women to eat with her foreign disciples; nor any one of the many happy ties that that day brought into existence and consecrated."[2]

Six years later, Margaret would write in a letter that this day marked for her too her first meeting with the Holy Mother, and that it was on this day [March 17] that she began living with Joe and Sara[3]. Later the Holy Mother and Gopaler-ma also visited the little cottage where the women lived.[4]

In India, orthodox Hindu women of that era ate only with other orthodox Hindu women. As Swami Vivekananda had repeatedly warned the three Westerners, in India Europeans and Indians were as oil and water. Pravrajika Atmaprana has stated in *Sister Nivedita of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda*, [hereafter *Sister Nivedita*], about the significance of this event and Josephine MacLeod's part in it: "The Holy Mother's partaking of food with the foreign ladies had a deeper implication. It was a sanction given by her to accept and absorb these Western devotees within the folds of Hindu Society[5]." Later Vivekananda wrote to Ramakrishnananda: "Sri Mother is here and the European and American ladies went the other day to see her and what do you think, *Mother ate with them even there*. Is not that grand?"[6]

Margaret wrote of this "Day of Days" in her diary, and of the deep significance of Holy Mother's having eaten with the Western devotees. In a letter to a friend, she explained: "This gave us all a dignity and *made my future work possible in a way nothing else could possibly have done*." [7]

According to Swami Aseshananda, writing in *Glimpses of a Great Soul*, the Holy Mother visited the three women in the little cottage two times. The first time was at the invitation of Sara Bull. He writes: "[The three women] couldn't speak Bengali and the Mother couldn't speak English, but they all understood the language of the heart. Later, the three Western women were visited by Holy Mother once again. She greeted each of them affectionately as 'my daughter' and when Miss MacLeod said, 'Won't you eat with us?' Holy Mother readily

agreed. Swamiji was tremendously pleased when he heard about it." Swami Aseshananda has further commented on the meaning of the Mother's eating with the Western women:
Swamiji's delight was in learning that the Mother had demonstrated Sri Ramakrishna's teaching: "Among the devotees of God there should not be any distinction of caste. Devotees are all one by the tie of love for God." Nevertheless, the Mother herself said later, "I did not take rice -- I took only fruits and sweets. I did not violate the rules of Hindu scriptures in spirit when I gladly accepted the invitation of Miss MacLeod for lunch and ate with the devotees of our Master on that day at Belur."[8]
Vivekananda was himself being castigated by some of the most orthodox simply because he had crossed the ocean and had lived with foreigners for three years. Clearly, he had not expected his Western devotees to be treated as anything other than short-term tourists, and now they were being admitted as devotees into the inner circle of the Holy Mother. This was one of the grandest gifts of grace the Mother could have bestowed on her son, Swami Vivekananda, and it was surely a great gift that *Jaya* offered up to the swami -- that of having conquered the wall of caste.
A story that Joe later told about one of the first times she saw the Holy Mother may have taken place on this first day. As she told it, when she saw other women devotees going into Mother's room and saluting her by kneeling down and touching her feet with their foreheads, she had not known what to do. She did not want to appear disrespectful. Suddenly, she said, Holy Mother caught her eye and with a very slight movement of her hand indicated that she need not follow the Hindu custom. Joe was struck by the Mother's common sense, and later spoke of it as one of her most impressive characteristics.[9]
One day soon after, Swami Vivekananda also sent Joe and Sara by boat to Kamarhati to visit Gopaler-ma, regarded as a saint by Vivekananda and other monks. Later, though she had not been present[10], Margaret would write of their visit to Gopaler-ma: "Mounting the flight of steps of the bathing ghat rising out of the water, going past the terraced lawn, entering the little room, they were delighted. This was the room where the old saint had stayed for many years and *seen* God!"[11]
Swami Chetanananda has written in *They Lived with God* that Gopaler-ma received the women cordially and kissed them and then they sat on her bed. She served them some light refreshments and told them about some of her spiritual experiences. Later Swami Vivekananda said of their meeting with her, "Ah! This is the *old* India that you have seen, the India of prayers and tears, of vigils and fasts, that is passing away[12]." Swami Saradananda wrote in *Sri Ramakrishna, The Great Master* that Gopaler-ma saw her baby Gopala (a form of the Lord) dwelling in those three women.[13]
Gopaler-ma visited Sara, Joe, and Margaret at their little cottage, probably accompanying the Holy Mother there at least once, and according to *The Life*, she also went and stayed with the women for three days.[14]

[1] CWSN2:414-15.
[2] CWSNl :281-82.
[3] Letters SN II, #279, p. 635.
[4] Swami Aseshanand a, Glimp - ses, p. 22.
[5] SNRV, pp. 36-37.
[6] Letters SV, p. 377.
[7] Letters SN I,# 4, p. 10.
[8] Swami Aseshananda, Glimp ses, p. 22.
[9] Swami Chetanananda , Holy Mother : A Biography in Pic tures, p. 64.
[10] Letters SN I, #128, p. 348 .
[11] SNRV, p. 209.
[12] Swami Chetanananda, They Lived with God, p. 349.
[13] Swami Saradananda, Sri Ramakrishna , The Great Master, p. 762.
[14] Life II, pp. 320-21.

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THE DEDICATED

The third event of great importance that occurred during this early period in the lives of Joe, Sara, and Margaret came about on March 25. Margaret (who on this day became Sister Nivedita, as she will henceforth be called), wrote very simply: "On ... Friday, the Christian feast of the Annunciation, -- [Swami] took us all three back to the [temporary] Math, and there, in the worship-room, was held a little service of initiation, where one [*she*] was made a Brahmacharini [*novitiate who has taken the first vows*]. That was the happiest of mornings. After the service, we were taken upstairs. The Swami put on the ashes and bone-earrings and matted locks of a Shiva-yogi, and sang and played to us -- Indian music on Indian instruments, -- for an hour. And in the evening, in our boat on the Ganges, he opened his heart to us, and told us much of his questions and anxieties regarding the trust that he held from his own Master."[1]

To Nivedita, whose name means *one who is dedicated*, Swamiji said at the end of the vows ceremony, "Go thou, and follow Him who was born and gave His life for others *five hundred times* before He attained the vision of the Buddha!"[2]

On March 30 Swamiji left Calcutta for Darjeeling, accompanied by Swami Nirbhayananda and Babu Nityagopal Bose[3]. Henrietta Muller soon joined him at Darjeeling. A letter written by Sister Nivedita to Swami Akhandananda provides a glimpse of the life of the Western devotees during the swami's absence. On Easter Sunday morning she wrote: "... On Good Friday I went to Belur -- for the whole day and night. We heard Swami Saradananda at Rishra Hall, and then came down the river and landed at Dakshineswar and the two Swamis, Miss MacLeod, and I went wandering about the garden. Presently we sat down under the Tree and Swami Saradananda chanted wonderful Sanskrit prayers and the Great Night was all around us and it was beautiful. And our thoughts were full of another Eastern Garden and another Good Friday long ago, when the Disciples' hearts were heavy with the sense of failure; but it was all peaceful and happy at the foot of the Tree."[4]

From Darjeeling, Swami Vivekananda wrote to Joe on April 18:

My Dear Joe Joe,

> I was down with fever brought upon, perhaps, by excessive mountain climbing and the bad health in the station.
> I am better today and intend leaving this in a day or two. In spite of the great heat there, I used to sleep well in Calcutta and had some appetite. Here both have vanished -- this is all the gain.
> I could not see Miss Muller yet on the subject of Marguerite [Margaret]; but I intend to write her today. She is making all arrangements to receive her here. Mr. Gupta is also invited to teach them Bengali. She may now do something about her. I shall, however, write.
> It will be easy for Marguerite to see Kashmir any time during her stay; but if Miss M. is not willing, there will be a big row again to injure both her and Marguerite.
> I am not sure whether I go to Almora again. Much riding it seems is sure to bring on a relapse.
> I will wait for you at Simla - whilest you pay your visit to the Seviers. We will think on it when I am in. I am so glad to learn that Miss Noble delivered an address at the R.K. Mission.
> With all love to the Trinity,
>
> Ever yours in the Lord,
> Vivekananda[5]

As mentioned previously, it had been planned that Joe and Sara would be making a trip into the Himalayas and that Swamiji might accompany them. Sister Nivedita had been invited by Henrietta Muller to join her in Darjeeling. Then Sara and Joe invited Nivedita to join them on

their pilgrimage, and having been informed of this, he wrote a postcard to Joe on April 19. Perhaps because it was a postcard, and not private, it began with a formal salutation:

My dear Miss M'cLeod,

> Miss Muller is very glad to learn that you intend inviting Miss Noble to join our party to Kashmir. It has her hearty approval. On her way back Miss Muller will start something for her [Nivedita] in Calcutta. She [Nivedita] need not come to Darjeeling at all.
> Hope you are enjoying the baking quite a bit. I start this week most probably.
>
> Ever yours in the Lord,
> Vivekananda[6]

And on April 29 he again wrote to Joe from Darjeeling. This is one of the important letters that he wrote to her, for it was in this letter that he showed his regard for Joe by asking her help on what was to become the *Udbodhan*, a Bengali journal. Later in the fall, Joe would respond to this request with a money gift. In addition, the letter shows Vivekananda's playful, loving way of taking a great Upanishadic teaching and mixing it with modern humor which he knew Joe would appreciate. It was a teaching she never forgot, often quoting to others about "the great doctrine of correspondence of light." He wrote:

My Dear Joe Joe,

> I have had several attacks of fever, the last being influenza. It has left me now, only I am very weak yet. As soon as I gather strength enough to undertake the journey, I come down to Calcutta.
> On Sunday I leave Darjeeling, probably stopping for a day or two at Kurseong, then direct to Calcutta. Calcutta must be very hot just now. Never mind, it is all the better for influenza. In case the plague breaks out in Calcutta, I must not go anywhere; and you start for Kashmir with Sadananda. How did you like the old gentleman, Devendra Nath Tagore? Not as stylish as "Hans Baba" with Moon God and Sun God of course. What enlightens your insides on a dark night when the Fire God, Sun God, Moon God, and Star Goddesses have gone to sleep? It is hunger that keeps my consciousness up, I have discovered. Oh, the great doctrine of correspondence of light! Think how dark the world has been all these ages without it! And all this knowledge and love and work and all the Buddhas and Krishnas and Christs -- vain, vain have been their lives and work, for they did not discover *that* "which keeps the inner light when the Sun and Moon were gone to the limbo" for the night! Delicious, isn't it?
> If the plague comes to my native city, I am determined to make myself a sacrifice; and that I am sure is a "Darn sight better way to Nirvana" than pouring oblations to all that ever twinkled.
> I have had a good deal of correspondence with Madras with the result that I need not send them any help just now. On the other hand I am going to start a paper in Calcutta. I will be ever so much obliged if you help me starting that. As always with undying love,
>
> Ever yours in the Lord,
> Vivekananda[7]

While Vivekananda was in Darjeeling, construction continued at the new Math site at Belur. On April 7, the Holy Mother visited the temporary garden house Math, where she worshipped Sri Ramakrishna, and then went by boat to the new Math grounds. There she walked about with Joe, Sara, and Sister Nivedita.[8]
Vivekananda had said to Joe that if plague came to Calcutta, he would make himself a sacrifice. This he did when plague broke out. On May 3 he returned to Calcutta, though in ill health, to direct relief work by his brothers in the midst of thousands who were trying to flee the city. The swami and Sister Nivedita composed plague pamphlets in English, which were then translated into Hindi and Bengali. These pamphlets were designed to quiet the fears of the

people and give them courage and some practical instructions. Arrangements were made for nursing and for cleaning areas hit by the plague.[9]

Workers quickly volunteered to cooperate with Vivekananda's disciples, including Sister Nivedita, Swami Sadananda, and others, and Swamiji himself directed them in how to clean the lanes and houses of the plague-infested areas and how to teach sanitation to the inhabitants. As *The Life* states: "This work endeared him to the people. They saw that he was in truth a practical Vedantist, for he applied the metaphysical doctrines of the Vedanta to the relief of want and affliction among his fellow Indians."[10]

A letter from J. J. Goodwin written to Joe on May 5, 1898, reflects Joe's attitude towards India, now that she had been there to see for herself what it was like. Goodwin had now been there for sixteen months, travelling the first seven months or so with Swami Vivekananda, then going to Madras in July 1897 to work on the *Brahmavadin* journal. Goodwin's letter to Joe stated:

When I came to India I need not say what my feelings were with regard to Swamiji, but I have been here 16 months, and I have completely come round to your point of view. I will do *anything* for him personally, but I simply do not care a pin for anything else. If I do any of his work it will be merely because *he* wishes it. Partly for this reason I am for the present really out of the work altogether....

I believe I am about 50 per cent American and the rest English (and, in a whisper please, not a bit Hindu). I realize more and more every day that the Swami is not a Hindu -- as Hindus go because everything must be judged by the sum-total, and the sum-total of India is meanness, and petty scheming, and *not* religion. [*Not* is underlined three times.][11]

Years later when interviewed by Romain Rolland about Swami Vivekananda, Joe told him that Swami Vivekananda had warned her not to criticize the Indians, and that she had conformed strictly to this regulation until she felt the desire to criticize, at which time she simply left.[12]

[1] CWSN 1:282.
[2] Life II, p. 320.
[3] Life II, p. 326.
[4] Letters SN I,# 3 , p. 8.
[5] CW 8:448-49.
[6] CW 9:104.
[7] CW 8:450-51.
[8] SNRV, p. 41.
[9] SNRV, pp. 41-42 .
[10] Life II, p. 329.
[11] Friends Coll.
[12] Inde , May 14, 1927, p. 197.

DIVINE PILGRIMAGE

The ending of plague in Calcutta brought to a quiet close the beginning period of this Divine Year which Joe, Sara, and Sister Nivedita shared with Swami Vivekananda. They were now poised, as it were, for the Great Pilgrimage on which Swami Vivekananda *would* accompany them and which would begin on May 11 and extend over several months. By the time it ended, the little cottage they had shared would no longer be available to them. Though they would share many types of accommodations during the trip, never again would they be together in quite the way they had been in the little cottage -- "all love," as Vivekananda had put it -- which Sara and Joe had put together using only Yankee ingenuity.

Pain was going to come close to all of them during their months with Swamiji, and never again would any of them be quite the same as they had been during this precious bonding period as the Trinity. For as long as Sara and Nivedita were alive, their correspondence with Joe would speak with reverence and with awe of that Great Year, and this time they had had together in the little cottage was the foundation of love between them that would make that year Divine.

It was very necessary for the training Vivekananda wanted to give them that they genuinely care for one another, harbor no jealousy or ill feelings, and understand well their own unique relationships with him. Sister Nivedita, it was clearly understood by all, would be the main worker, the one to whom Vivekananda would direct much attention and training so she could work for the women of India. Sara and Joe had to understand and accept her position. It should not be thought, however, that they received no training themselves.

In describing this period, *The Life* states: "To the Swami, all that was Indian was sacred and wonderful. Later on, as he moved with his disciples from city to city and province to province, he would recount to them the glories and beauties of the land. He was anxious that his Western disciples make an impartial study of Indian problems. They were not to see the glories only, but to have also a clear understanding of the problems, and to bring the ideals and methods of Western science and civilization to bear on the task of finding solutions. Often he contrasted East with West, bringing out the merits and defects of the civilizations of the world. Above all, he gave them the *spirit* of India, initiated them into its values, and demonstrated its worth."[1]

And Sister Nivedita herself makes it clear in *The Master* that although Swamiji had suggested that she join the party for the purpose of receiving his personal training for specific work, the method of that training proved entirely general. "We would sit all together," she states, "... and listen, all together, to the discourse of the hour, each appropriating as much as she chose, and studying afterwards as she liked."[2]

[1] Life II, p. 324.
[2] CWSN 1:77.

TRAINING THE TRINITY (Part Two)

Now the pilgrimage and the time of Vivekananda's most intense and uninterrupted training of his Western disciples began. For the time being, Joe, referred to in Sister Nivedita's *Notes on Wanderings* as Jaya, will be referred to as Joe outside quoted material, simply because she herself once said that Vivekananda called her Joe.[1]

On Wednesday, May 11, Swamiji's pilgrimage party left Howrah station for Kathgodam. The party included two of Vivekananda's brother disciples, Swamis Turiyananda and Niranjanananda; two of his monastic disciples, Swamis Sadananda and Swarupananda; and, of course, Joe, Sara, and Nivedita. Later on, Mrs. Patterson, wife of the American Consul-General, would also join the party.

Captain and Charlotte Sevier had invited Swami Vivekananda to visit them in Almora where they had now taken up residence, and the Raja of Khetri had also invited him to come to Naini Tal[2]. Joe's reminiscences state:

On the twelfth [*actually the eleventh*] of May in 1898 we started *en route* to Kashmir. We stopped at Naini Tal, the summer residence of the U.P. Government, and there hundreds of Indians met Swami with a beautiful hill pony on which they put him. Then they scattered before him flowers and palms, exactly as they did before Christ when he went into Jerusalem. And I said at once, "So, this is an oriental custom."

He left us alone for three days. We did not see him at all. We stayed at a hotel. Finally he sent for us. We went into one of the little houses, and there I saw him sitting on his bed wreathed in smiles, so happy was he to see us again. We had given him utter freedom. We never paid any attention to him. He never felt the weight of us. There was never any feeling of the necessity of entertainment[3].

Years later Romain Rolland would say of Joe, "She is free and she knows how to respect the freedom of others -- even of the ones she loves[4]." Joe would for the entire seven years of her relationship with Swami Vivekananda be constantly protective of his freedom. And she would protect him from the feeling of pressure ("weight," as she called it). It is one of the most important gifts she gave to Vivekananda, and the one which perhaps determined for Joe her own estimate of the relationship she had with Vivekananda -- that of *friend.*

Sister Nivedita wrote about Naini Tal in *Notes on Wanderings*:

Naini Tal was made beautiful by three things, -- the Master's pleasure in introducing to us his disciple, the Raja of Khetri; the dancing girls who met us and asked us where to find him, and were received by him, in spite of the remonstrances of others; and by the Mohammedan gentleman who said, "Swamiji, if in aftertimes any claim you as an Avatar, remember that I, a Mohammedan, am the first!"...

The incident of the dancing girls occurred in consequence of our visit to the two temples at the head of the tarn,... Here, offering worship, we found two nautch women.... We took them for respectable ladies of the town, and were much astonished later at the storm which had evidently passed over the Swami's audience at his refusal to have them turned away.[5]

The party left Naini Tal on May 16, a few hours before dusk. They planned to stay overnight in a dak bungalow (or rest house) and reach Almora the next morning. Swami Premananda, against the advice of others, had come on horseback from Almora to accompany the swami's party there. In pitch dark, they had to pass through a deep forest of pine, oak, and deodar, which at that time was filled with wild animals: leopards, wild pigs, bears, tigers, and king cobras. Porters walked at the head of the party, carrying pine torches to keep the animals at bay.[6]

Just behind the lead porters rode Swami Premananda, and at some distance behind him, forming a caravan of individual dandis, rode all the others. A dandi was a canopied stretcher carried by porters. When Swami Vivekananda reached the dak bungalow that night he learned that at some point Swami Premananda had fallen from his horse and injured his arm. "Lest I rebuke him," Vivekananda later wrote, "he stayed in a private lodging house. Because of his fall, Miss MacLeod gave him her Dandi and herself came on the horse."[7]

As early as July 7, 1896, Swamiji had discussed with the Seviers his dream of establishing a monastery somewhere in the Himalayas[9]. More recently, on May 20, 1898, he had written in a letter, “I hope to start a home in the Himalayas somewhere near Almora for my Western friends very soon[9].” In the next section of Joe’s reminiscences, she explains how the location of his dreamed-of ashrama in the Himalayas was chosen. She writes:

From [Naini Tal] we started for Almora where [Vivekananda] became the guest of Mr. and Mrs. Sevier. We took a bungalow of our own, and there we stayed a month. Swamiji always meant Almora to be the Himalayan home of his Western disciples and expected the monastery to be founded there. But Mr. Sevier, who took his vocation of founding a monastery very seriously, was so interrupted by people coming in to tea-parties daily that he insisted on going forty miles farther into the Himalayas; so Mayavati Ashrama, when started, was eighty miles from a station -- and there were no proper roads.[10]

They arrived at Almora on May 17 and remained there until June 11. Here the old pattern of Vivekananda’s morning tutorials began again. He would come to see the women for early breakfast, and then spend some hours in talk. Nivedita recorded that sometimes, but rarely, the women would see the swami again in the evening, either meeting him when out for a walk, or seeing him when they went to visit the Seviers.[11]

In view of all the travelling the women did with Swamiji during these several months, it is notable that Joe’s health was never really top-notch. She has been described by others as “frail[12],” and she herself once stated that beginning in 1895 when she met Vivekananda she was “more or less an invalid” for the next eighteen years.[13]

[1] Inde, May 16 , 1927, p. 211.
[2] Comp . Biog II, pp. 1060-61.
[3] Rems., pp. 234-35.
[4] Inde, May 18, 1927, p. 211.
[5] CWSN 1:284-85.
[6] Editorial, "Vivekananda in Kumaon, " II PB, February 1993, p. 87.
[7] CW8:452.
[8] CW8, p. 379.
[9] "Un published Letters of Swami Vivekananda " II, PB, September 1977, p. 396.
[10] Rems., p. 235.
[11] CWSN 1:286.
[12] Whitmarsh , 1989.
[13] Swami Shraddhananda , The Story of An Epoch, pp. 128-30.

CONFLICT AND RECONCILIATION

There would be many walls and obstacles to conquer on this pilgrimage, and one of the earliest was the terrific clash that flared up between Vivekananda and Nivedita. As Nivedita put it, it had really begun just after her initiation in March. She wrote in *Notes on Wanderings*:

The youngest of the Swami's disciples at this time ... was an English woman, [meaning herself], and of how much this fact meant intellectually, -- what a strong bias it implied, and always does imply, in the reading of India, what an idealism of the English race and all their deeds and history, -- the Swami himself had had no conception till the day after her initiation at the monastery.... [At] Almora, it seemed as if a going-to-school had commenced, and just as schooling is often disagreeable to the taught, so here, though it cost infinite pain, the blindness of a half-view must be done away....

These morning talks at Almora then, took the form of assaults upon deep-rooted preconceptions, social, literary, and artistic, or of long comparison of Indian and European history and sentiments, often containing extended observations of very great value.... He was always testing his disciples, and the manner of these particular discourses was probably adopted in order to put to the proof the courage and sincerity of one who was both woman and European.[1]

Joe MacLeod later told Romain Rolland about how she perceived the swami's treatment of Sister Nivedita in the beginning of her training. According to Rolland's diary: "[Swami Vivekananda] insulted in every way he could [Sister Nivedita's] proud and righteous English character. And perhaps also he wanted to protect himself from the adoring fondness that Nivedita showed for him.... Although the feelings of Nivedita were always pure, perhaps Vivekananda sensed possible danger. He chided her sharply without consideration. He found fault with everything she did. She sometimes returned in tears, seeking consolation in the arms of Miss MacLeod[2]."

Sister Nivedita later recorded in *The Master*, "Suffering is often illogical, and I cannot attempt to justify by reason the degree of unhappiness which I experienced at this time, as I saw the dream of a friendly and beloved leader falling away from me, and the picture of one who would be at least indifferent, and possibly, silently hostile, substituting itself instead[3]."

Then she wrote of how there came a time when "one of the older ladies of the party, thinking that such intensity of pain might go too far, gently interceded with the swami" on her behalf[4]. According to Romain Rolland's text of this incident, Sister Nivedita "got consolation from her companions, who then remonstrated with Vivekananda for his excessive severity[5]." According to Lizelle Reymond, writing in *The Dedicated*, it was Sara Bull who intervened on Nivedita's behalf[6]. But according to Swami Nikhilananda's biography of Swami Vivekananda, it was Joe MacLeod who did the interceding[7].

In Nivedita's own words, Swamiji listened to one of the older women of the party, went off for some time, then returned to them in the evening and said to that woman "with the simplicity of a child, 'You were right. There must be a change. I am going away into the forests to be alone, and when I come back I shall bring peace.' Then he turned and saw that above us the moon was new, and a sudden exaltation came into his voice as he said, 'See! The Mohammedans think much of the new moon. Let us also with the new moon begin a new life!' As the words ended, he lifted his hands and blessed, with silent depths of blessing, his most rebellious disciple, by this time kneeling before him.... It was assuredly a moment of wonderful sweetness of reconciliation[8]."

According to Rolland's record of what Joe told him, Vivekananda completely changed his approach with Sister Nivedita and became much more gentle with her after this[9]. Nivedita also wrote that that very night in meditation, she herself proved the truth of Sri Ramakrishna's prophecy that his Naren would manifest his own great gift of bestowing knowledge with a touch, that she found herself gazing deep into an Infinite Good, and that she understood that the greatest teachers may destroy in their disciples a personal relationship only to bestow the Impersonal Vision in its place[10].

Perhaps it was at this time that the following well-known incident occurred. Sister Nivedita wrote in *The Master* of her scepticism of Swami Vivekananda's words which had bound her

from the very beginning of their association. Indeed, she stated that she had probably been invited to hear him that first Sunday afternoon in November of 1895 on the very basis of her keen discrimination in evaluating new ideas. “Referring to this scepticism of mine,” [she wrote] “... a more fortunate disciple ... was teasing me, in the Swami’s presence, and claiming that she had been able to accept every statement she had ever heard him make. The Swami paid little or no attention to the conversation at the time, but afterwards he took a quiet moment to say, ‘Let none regret that they were difficult to convince! I fought my Master for six years, with the result that I know every inch of the way! Every inch of the way[11]!” Tradition has it that the friend who did the teasing was Joe MacLeod, who in her own words had recognized as truth every statement she heard him make.

While the party was at Almora, a young man who wanted to be a monk came there, seeking out Swamiji’s company. This young man later became the famous writer and dramatist Mama Warerkar, and in his reminiscences of Vivekananda, he wrote about this visit to Almora. He mentioned all the members of the swami’s party, referring to the women as the “four foreign lady-disciples of Swamiji” [*Mrs. Patterson by now having joined them*], and stated: “Swamiji used to tell these foreign disciples interesting stories of ancient Indian history and mythology in his fluent and lucid style, which kept his audience spellbound. The listeners were, as it were, transported into the past. All these stories were known to me.... But to hear them from Swamiji was an entirely new experience....” Warerkar also described the swami’s extraordinary musical abilities, saying that the magic of his voice and his skill on tabla remain unmatched.[12]

[1] CWSN l:287-88.
[2] Inde , May 16, 1927, p. 209.
[3] CWSN 1:80.
[4] CWSN 1:80.
[5] Life and Gospel, p. 138.
[6] Dedicated, p. 112.
[7] Swami Nikhilananda , Vivekananda: A Biography, p. 45.
[8] CWSN 1:80.
[9] lnde, May 16, 1927, p. 209.
[10] CWSN 1:80-81.
[11] CWSN 1, p. 22.
[12] Swami Videhatmananda , "Mam a Warerkar and His Memoirs of Swami Vivekananda ," translated from Bengali by Prof. S. W. Nande, PB, August 1990, pp. 330-31.

SAD PASSINGS

At Almora, Swami Vivekananda received news of four deaths. In May a letter from Christine Greenstidle reported that Mrs. John Bagley of Detroit had died. She had been wife of the Governor of Michigan and Swami Vivekananda's host and great supporter. Swamiji wrote of her, "She was a good friend."[1]

Then on Friday morning, June 3, a cable was received at Thompson House where the swami was staying, informing the party of the death of J. J. Goodwin. He had died the night before of typhoid fever[2]. Vivekananda was not present when the cable was received, having gone with the Seviers on business for a few days. When he returned on Sunday evening, June 5, he was not yet told about Goodwin's death, for another letter was also waiting for him bringing news of the death of the old beloved saint Pavhari Baba with whom Swamiji had spent some weeks in 1890. When the swami read this news, he told the women: "I have just received a letter that says Pavhari Baba has completed all his sacrifices with the sacrifice of his own body. He has burnt himself in his sacrificial fire." When someone asked, "Wasn't that wrong?" he replied, "How can I tell? He was too great a man for me to judge. He knew himself what he was doing."[3]

And so it was agreed by the women, perhaps by a quiet nodding of heads, to wait until morning to inform Swamiji of Goodwin's passing. On Monday morning, Vivekananda went to Oakley House, where the women were staying; and it was then that Joe gently broke it to him. According to Nivedita, he took the news very quietly and sat with the women and chatted and read[4]. Sister Nivedita also wrote that some days later he refused to stay in the place where he had received this news, complaining of the weakness that brought the image of his most faithful disciple constantly to his mind[5].

Later on Monday, the swami composed a poem, "Requiescat in Pace," which he sent to Goodwin's mother, and in feeling words, paid tribute to his friend and disciple, saying, "The debt of gratitude I owe him can never be repaid, and those who think they have been helped by any thought of mine ought to know that almost every word of it was published through the untiring and most unselfish exertions of Mr. Good-win."[6]

In Joe's reminiscences of this incident she states:

While we were [at Almora], word came that Mr. Goodwin had died at Ootacamund. When Swamiji learnt that Mr. Good-win had died, he looked a long time out upon the snowcapped Himalayas without speaking and presently he said, "My last public utterance is over." And he seldom spoke in public again.[7]

Still another shock came when Swamiji learned of the death on May 13 of B. R. Rajam Iyer, who had been editor of *Prabuddha Bharata*, the English journal. Vivekananda had founded this publication in 1896, having it published in Madras; and he himself had contributed some articles to it.[8]

In her June 5 letter to Nell Hammond, Sister Nivedita described the little home at Oakley House which the Trinity shared in Almora. She wrote: "You never knew anything so 'blessed' (to quote Miss MacLeod's favourite word) as this little home amongst the mountains with its utter love and generosity and simplicity. Mrs. Bull is the incarnation of loving -- no, love-full sanctity -- and Miss MacLeod of fire and courage -- and our other guest Mrs. Patterson is a true lover of the Master -- which I know is a royal road to your heart."[9]

Joe later told Romain Rolland that the Westerners who fell in with Swami Vivekananda were held in disrepute. Rolland wrote in his diary: "Miss MacLeod, prudent, allowed herself to speak as little as possible to anyone about Sister Nivedita. Besides, she was American and relied upon the goodwill of the American Consul General Patterson whose wife had been a follower of Vivekananda from his early days in the West. [After Vivekananda returned to India], Mrs. Patterson requested of [President] McKinley that he name her husband Consulate General in India so that she could be near Vivekananda again, but the swami refused to go to see her [when she came to India] so as not to compromise her and her husband in the eyes of European society.

And it was necessary that she be the one, the brave and beautiful American, who would go to him."[10]

Mrs. Patterson had, during Swami Vivekananda's early days in America, befriended him, taking him into her home upon hearing, with indignation, that he had been refused admittance to hotels because of his color. Now, in India, when she had heard of the pilgrimage, she boldly joined the party without caring that she might be compromising herself in the eyes of the official world of Calcutta.[11]

On June 11, the little "blessed" house in the mountains was vacated, and Swamiji's party began its journey to Kashmir.

To carry all the belongings, equipment for rest stops, plus the travellers themselves in dandis, there were dozens of porters. Seldom are these indispensable people mentioned in accounts of the group's travels, but Lizelle Reymond made an important contribution to knowledge of Joe when she described her friendship with these porters. She wrote in *The Dedicated*: "Jaya, as Swamiji liked to call her: Jaya, the Victorious One -- was the boldest of the group, all fire and courage, never tiring. Her temerity had already become a legend. The [porters] adored her. At the halts along the way she had slipped between the tents to question them all, to get to know each one personally. She watched them at work, supple and agile like genii of the forest. She would go off with them into the mountains, searching out the picturesque villages. For her, these men were the illustrations to the stories the swami told his disciples."[12]

It is reminiscent of Betty's description of Joe going about "here and there on shipboard," visiting, striking up new friendships. It is also of note that Swami Vivekananda himself is said to have done the same thing, taking a sincere interest in the porters.[13]

On Sunday, June 12, the second day of their journey to Kashmir, the party stopped in a remote hotel above a lake and falls; and it was there that Swamiji rendered a translation of the Rudra Prayer and the Hymn of Sweetness.[14]

[1] Life II, p. 347.
[2] CWSN 1:299.
[3] Life II, p . 350.
[4] Letters SN I,# 5, p. 15.
[5] CWSN l: 300.
[6] Gertrude Sen , "Swam i Viveka na nda in Al mora ," PB, Ma y 1963 , p. 277.
[7] Rems., p. 235.
[8] Life II, p. 350.
[9] Letters SN I,# 5, p . 15.
[10] Inde , May 16 , 1927, p. 204 .
[11] Life II, p. 330.
[12] Dedicated , pp. 107-08.
[13] Swami Achalananda , "Nine Months with Swami Viveka nanda ," translated from Bengali by Swami Chetanananda , VK, August 1989, p. 293
[14] CWSN 1:306-07.

TERRIBLE REVELATIONS

It took two days for the party to reach Kathgodam, the final stretch from Howrah being made by train. Incidents that occurred during this railway journey illustrate the difficulty that was created by Vivekananda's association with the Western women, and how he handled it and taught at the same time. According to Lizelle Reymond:

At a particular station platform, the party was proceeding to a restaurant, and the liveried waiters stopped Swamiji as he was going to enter it, the ladies having already done so. They all came away without protest. At another railway restaurant, they were all seated, waiting for [their orders], when a white-skinned railway officer who happened to pass by became [enraged] at seeing Swamiji..., and ordered him to get out. Here also, they all came away without creating a scene.... [Now] Nivedita understood why Swamiji preferred to take his meals in his own [train] compartment along with the monks rather than accompanying his [Western] disciples to a railway restaurant....[1]

Sister Nivedita writing to a friend on May 22 from Almora, had expressed herself vividly on race-hatred in India, saying: "One of the monks has had a warning this morning that the police are watching the Swami thro' spies -- of course we know this -- in a general way -- but this brings it pretty close, and I cannot help attaching some importance to it, tho' the Swami laughs. The Government must be mad -- or at least will prove so if he is interfered with. That would be the torch to carry fire through the country -- and I the most loyal Englishwoman that ever breathed in this country ... will be the first to light up. You could not imagine what race-hatred means, living in England. Manliness seems a barrier to nothing -- 3 white women travelling with the Swami and other "natives" -- lay themselves and their friends open to horrid insults --..."[2]

Joe's reminiscences continue:

We left Almora on the twentieth [*actually eleventh*] of June for Kashmir. By train to Rawalpindi, where we got tongas with three horses abreast to drive us the two hundred miles up into Kashmir. There were relays of horses every five miles, so that we dashed through on top of this beautiful road, as perfect then as any road the Romans ever made.[3]

Sister Nivedita stated that the party actually went first to Muree from Rawalpindi, arriving there on Wednesday, June 15 and remaining until Saturday the 18th. Then they set out for Kashmir, and the greatest period of their time with Swamiji began.[4]

On the 18th of June, according to Sister Nivedita, one of the party was ill. For this reason, the party went only a short distance, stopping at Dulaik, the first dak bungalow across the border. Nivedita described the moment of their crossing:

It was a curious moment, leaving British India behind, with the crossing of a dusty, sunbaked bridge. We were soon to have a vivid realisation of just how much and just how little this demarcation meant.

We were now in the valley of the Jhelum. Our whole journey, from Kohala to Baramulla, was to run through a narrow, twisting, mountain-pass, the rapidly-rising ravine of this river. Here, at Dulai, the speed of the current was terrific, and huge water-smoothed pebbles formed a great shingle.[5]

That afternoon a storm compelled the group to stay indoors and, according to Nivedita, it was then that Swamiji spoke out frankly and openly about some of the evil practices that existed in Hinduism.[45] "It was a terrible but necessary revelation that never required to be repeated," Sister Nivedita states, "and it has been related here [in *Notes on Wanderings*], in its true place in order that none may be able to say that he deceived those who trusted him as to the worst things that might be urged against any of his people or their creeds."[6]

On June 19 the women took turns driving with the swami in his tonga. "He talked," wrote Sister Nivedita, "of Brahmavidya, the vision of the One, the Alone-Real, and told how love was the only cure for evil.... Then he told us, 'Though I often say strange things and angry things, yet

remember that in my heart I never seriously mean to preach anything but love! All these things will come right only when we realize that we love each other.'"[7]

On June 20, driving through the most beautiful part of the Pass and seeing cathedral rocks and an old ruined temple of the Sun, the party reached Baramulla. Nivedita wrote: "The legend is that the Vale of Kashmir was once a lake and that at this point the Divine Boar pierced the mountains with his tusks, and let the Jhelum go free. Another piece of geography in the form of myth. Or is it also prehistoric history?"[8]

The first day in Baramulla Vivekananda went out to hire dungas, or houseboats, and met a man who, on hearing his revered name, offered to take on all the responsibilities of getting the party set up. By four o'clock that afternoon there were [four] dungas for them to use, and they presently set forth for Srinagar.[9]

Joe's reminiscences give vivid sketches of this period: She writes:

These boats called dungas are about seventy feet long and broad enough to have two single beds in them and a corridor between, covered with a matting house; so wherever we wanted a window we only had to roll up the matting. The whole roof could be lifted in the daytime, and thus we lived in the open, yet knew there was always a roof over our heads. We had four of these dungas, one for Mrs. Ole Bull and me, one for Mrs. Patterson and Sister Nivedita, and one for Swami and one of his monks. Then a dining room boat where we all met to have our meals.[10]

Often in later years, Nivedita would write of these days in letters to Joe, and once declared about this particular period: "How I wish I cd. go back to the days beside the Jhelum -- and the nights when I used to talk you to sleep! 'Ah for the touch of a vanished hand -- and the sound of a voice that is still!' But On! On! Even as those days have passed, we ourselves shall pass -- and the quiet of hillsides sleeping under stars shall be in our hearts."[11]

[1] Dedicated , pp. 118-19.
[2] Letters SN I, #4, p. 11. 42. Rems., p. 235.
[3] CWSN l:311.
[4] CWSN l:311.
[5] CWSN l:311.
[6] CWSN l , p. 312.
[7] CWSN l , p. 312.
[8] CWSN l, p. 315.
[9] CWSN l, p. 316.
[10] Rems., pp. 235-36.
[11] Letters SN II, #332, p. 719.

FROM THE UNREAL TO THE REAL

Wherever Swamiji was with the women, he taught. Sometimes it was with great drama and seriousness, and sometimes it was with long stretches of silence. In most of *Notes on Wanderings* by Sister Nivedita no personalities are mentioned by name, but now and then one catches a quick glimpse of Joe in a conversational exchange. For example, Sister Nivedita recorded that at one point the swami made a great effort to explain Brahman to them. She wrote: "'Then would you say, Swami,' -- said one -- 'that whatever God is, He includes Personality?' The Swami hesitated, and Jaya intervened -- 'Whatever GOD is, He includes Personalities!' -- and this was accepted at once as the formula."[1]

On another occasion he was explaining about manifestations of Brahman, and Sister Nivedita recorded:

[The Swami said]: "We call such a manifestation an Ishvara -- Avatara, and there always come with It a group of persons called Ishwarakotis, whose distinguishing mark is that they are never able to act for themselves; they are always bent on serving others. These assist in spreading the idea.

"My part?" [Swamiji said]. "Oh, Ramakrishna always said I was the man* of this Incarnation."

"And is that why you have never seen the face of Sarada, nor she yours, even when you were young?" said Jaya. The Master nodded. And the spirit of mischief entered into the Lady Lakshmi [*Joe*] and she teased him to tell us who his Guru had said he was.... But on that point the Master was inexorable. He had never talked of such nonsense, he said and dismissed the question with a frown. But Lady Lakshmi knew what she was at -- and afterwards she told one who understood not how it was believed amongst the Brotherhood that He who had spoken the Gita, and he to whom it was said had alike dwelt in the garden at Dakshineswar, in the Persons of the Lord and Our Own Master.[2]

Joe's reminiscences are beautifully descriptive of the Trinity's days in the company of Vivekananda. She also shows keen observation of detail and action, a great sense of fun, and an appreciation for the skills of others. Writing of Baramulla, she says:

Baramulla is something like Venice. So many of the streets are canals. We had our own little private boat in which we went to and from the mainland. But the merchants would come in small crafts all about our boats. We did most of our shopping over the rails of the boat. Each of our boats cost thirty rupees a month, which included the boatmen who fed themselves. The boatmen consisted of father, mother, son, daughter, and tiny children. They had their own little place at the end of the boat, and many a time we begged them for a taste of their food, the aroma being so delicious.

The manner of travelling in these boats is that the boat is punted up the river, or it is dragged, the boatmen walking along the shore, or it is rowed. There is nothing extra to pay regardless of how one is navigated. When we wanted to move up the Jhelum river to some of the lakes, we would tell our servants the night before; they would get in supplies of food including ducks or chickens, vegetables, eggs, butter, fruits, and milk. In the morning, when we awakened, we would feel the boat moving along, gliding so imperceptibly that we were scarcely conscious of the motion. Our servant who had walked ahead would then have a delicious meal waiting for us. This he made over a little trough long enough and narrow enough to hold three pans, one containing soup, one meat, and the other rice.

The dexterity of these people was a wonder and something we never got over. As a chicken is not considered clean food by the orthodox Hindus, we never told the people we intended to eat the chickens we bought. But when we went up the river, the lower part of the boat held half a dozen clucking chickens. The Pandits who could come to visit Swami would hear them and look around for them. Swami, who knew they were hidden underneath, had a twinkle in his eye, but he would never give us away. Then the Pandits would say, "But, Swami, why do you have to do with these ladies. They are mlechchhas. They are untouchables." Then the

Westerners would come to us and say, “But don’t you see? Swami is not treating you with respect. He meets you without his turban.” So we had great fun laughing at the idiosyncrasies of each other’s civilization.[3]

Srinagar is the capital of Kashmir, and the swami and his party spent the period of June 22 to July 15 on their dungas on the Jhelum river, in and about Srinagar. Of these days Sister Nivedita would often refer in her letters to Joe over the next several years. This period was, to quote from *The Life*, “an unparalleled educational experience for his companions. Many excursions were made; and many were the discussions. Sometimes the swami became so interested ... that he forgot all thought of food.”[4]

[1] CWSN 1:359.
[2] CWSN 1:359., p. 363.
[3] Rems., pp. 236-37.
[4] Life II, p. 360.

MORNING TUTORIALS

Throughout the five months of travel with his Western devotees, Swami Vivekananda maintained the regular practice of long morning talks. Over the months, they received in-depth training on a wide variety of subjects. Now in Srinagar, he talked to the women about the religious periods in the history of Kashmir, the morality of Buddhism, the history of Shiva-worship, the position of Srinagar under Kanishka, Ashoka, Genghis Khan, and more.[1]

One day he mentioned to them that as an itinerant monk he had carried only two books: the *Bhagavad Gita* and *The Imitation of Christ* by Thomas a Kempis. Vivekananda spoke to these women as he would speak to all his devotees, male or female, about the need for *manliness*. Later when he visited the West again, this theme would be referred to as "his new gospel of manliness," but it was really his constant gospel. Here in Srinagar he told the women about the greatness of the Gita, referring to it as "that wonderful poem, without one note in it of weakness or unmanliness."[2]

On June 26 Swamiji decided to go off by himself; but the women, not understanding his intention, followed him to Kshir-Bhavani. It is said that this was the first time a Christian or Muslim had set foot there. Nivedita stated that Kshir-Bhavani was afterwards to become the most sacred of all names to the women devotees, the reason for which becoming apparent in accounts of the later part of the summer.

Swami Vivekananda loved fun and play. In honor of the American women in the group, he set about to celebrate the Fourth of July. Sister Nivedita was taken into his confidence; and when she said that it was too bad they did not have an American flag to wave, welcoming the Americans to breakfast, he went out on July 3 and found a man who could create a semblance of the Stars and Stripes. Sister Nivedita later described the results, saying: "The stars and stripes were very crudely represented, I fear, on the piece of cotton that was nailed with branches of evergreens to the head of the dining-room-boat, when the Americans stepped on board for early tea, on Independence Day! But the Swami had postponed a journey, in order to be present at the little festival, and he himself contributed a poem ['To the Fourth of July'] to the addresses that were now read aloud, by way of greeting."[3]

Behold, the dark clouds melt away,
That gathered thick at night, and hung
So like a gloomy pall above the earth!
Before thy magic touch, the world
Awakes. The birds in chorus sing.
The flowers raise their star-like crowns,
Dew-set, and wave thee welcome fair.
The lakes are opening wide in love
Their hundred thousand lotus-eyes
To welcome thee, with all their depth.
All hail to thee, thou Lord of Light!
A welcome new to thee, today,
O Sun! Today thou sheddest *Liberty*!

Bethink thee how the world did wait,
And search for thee, through time and clime.
Some gave up home and love of friends,
And went in quest of thee, self-banished,
Through dreary oceans, through primeval forests,
Each step a struggle for their life or death;
Then came the day when work bore fruit,

And worship, love, and sacrifice,
Fulfilled, accepted, and complete.
Then thou, propitious, rose to shed
The light of *Freedom* on mankind.

Move on, O Lord, in thy resistless path!
Till thy high noon o'erspreads the world,
Till every land reflects thy light,
Till men and women, with uplifted head,
Behold their shackles broken, and
Know, in springing joy, their life renewed!

On July 6, Joe and Sara left on some personal business in Gulmarg, and Swamiji accompanied them part of the way[4]. The following Sunday, July 10, the women returned unexpectedly. During their absence, out of a desire for quiet and peace, he had headed off to visit the famous cave of Amarnath, the ice linga of Shiva. On July 15, however, he returned, saying that the summer had been unusually hot and certain glaciers had given way, making the route to Amarnath impassable.

Sister Nivedita stated the real significance of this incident: "[From] this moment dated the first of three great increments of joy and realization that we saw in him during our months in Kashmir. It was almost as if we could verify for ourselves the truth of that saying of his Guru -- 'There is indeed a certain ignorance. It has been placed there by my Holy Mother that her work may be done. But it is only like a film of tissue paper. It might be rent at any moment.'"[5]

On July 19 the party set out for Islamabad, arriving there on July 22. On the way they stopped at a quaint old Temple of Pandrethan, where Vivekananda seized the golden opportunity to introduce the Westerners to Indian archaeology and architecture. The next day they came upon the ruins of two great temples of Avantipur, where they walked across the fields and along the river bank for about three miles. As they walked, he talked to them about the concept of sin as it appears as a permanent feature in the Egyptian, Semitic, and Aryan races, but appears and disappears in the Vedas. He also talked about the future of India. "The national life in India," he said, "has renunciation as its source. Its highest ideas are service and Mukti."[6]

That afternoon Swami Vivekananda fell ill, but was fine the next day, when the party reached Islamabad. The dungas were moored beside an apple orchard. It must have been at about this time that Sara Bull received the dreaded news that her little granddaughter, Edwina, had died[7]. In Sister Nivedita's account, given here, of their stay in Islamabad, she told of the swami's personal talk with Sara (Dhira Mata) and Joe about death:

In the dusk [one] evening ... the Master engaged in the rarest of rare happenings, a personal talk with Dhira Mata and her whose name was Jaya. He had taken two pebbles into his hand, and was saying how, when he was well, his mind might direct itself to this and that, or his will might seem less firm, but let the least touch of pain or illness come, let him look death in the face for a while, and "I am as hard as that (knocking the stones together), for I *have* touched the feet of God."....[8]

[1] CWSN l:319, 323.
[2] CWSN l, pp. 323-24.
[3] CWSN l, p. 324-25.
[4] CWSN l, p. 327.
[5] CWSN l, pp. 327-28.
[6] Life II, pp. 365, 367-68.
[7] Friends Co ll., Mohini Chatterji to Josephine MacLeod, August 10, 1898.
[8] CWSNl:339-40.

THE GRACE OF AMARNATH

Then came a kind of turning point on the journey, especially for Sister Nivedita. She had come to India to serve Swamiji in a specific way: that of founding a school for girls in Calcutta. That evening he turned to her and asked whether she had forgotten about it, not having mentioned it for some time. When she expressed her wish to have some sort of tentative plan, not too ambitious at first but one that would ensure a religious basis in the worship of Ramakrishna, for the educational effort, he immediately pointed out that she would be making a sect in order to rise above all sects, then added, "I understand." Nivedita had then explained some specific plans for the work and asked him to give her his opinion. According to *Notes on Wanderings*, he waited a little before answering, then said:

"You ask me to criticize, but that I cannot do. For I regard you as inspired, quite as much inspired as I am. You know that's the difference between other religions and us. Other people believe their founder was inspired, and so do we. But so am I, also, just as much so as he, and you as I, and after you, your girls and their disciples will be. So I shall help you to do what you think best."

Then he turned to Dhira Mata and to Jaya, and spoke of the greatness of the trust that he would leave in the hands of that disciple who should represent the interests of women, when he should go west, of how it would exceed the responsibility of work for men. And he added, turning to the worker of the party [Nivedita], saying, "Yes, you have faith, but you have not that burning enthusiasm that you need. You want to be consumed [with] energy. Shiva! Shiva!"[1]

And the next day at lunch, Swamiji invited Sister Nivedita to go with him to the great holy Cave of Amarnath and be dedicated to Shiva. Two or three thousand pilgrims would be going there in a few days, and he wanted her to have direct knowledge and insight into that time-honored religious pilgrimage of India. It was settled that the other women would accompany them as far as Pahalgam and wait there for them to return from Amarnath. The next afternoon the party packed up and started.[2]

Leaving Joe, Sara, and Mrs. Patterson at Pahalgam, Swami Vivekananda and Sister Nivedita joined the bands of pilgrims on the long journey to Amarnath. On the way, Vivekananda wrote a short note which was probably meant for Joe:

I send back the old dandi as it is difficult to carry it through. I have got another like Margaret's. Please send it back to the tahasildar of Vernay Khan Chand Esq. whom you already know. We are all right. Margot has discovered some new flowers and is happy. There is not much ice so the road is good.

PS Keep the dandi til I come and pay the coolies (2) 4 Rs, 2 annas each.

Batarooti - 1st stage, 12 miles; Pahalgam - next stage.[3]

Sister Nivedita wrote in detail about the great experience of Amarnath. The last section reads:

On Tuesday, August the 2nd, the great day of Amarnath, the first batch of pilgrims must have left the camp at two! We left by the light of the full moon. The sun rose as we went down the narrow valley.... When we left our Dandies and began to climb, the real danger began. A sort of goatpath in almost vertical hillsides, becoming in the descent ... a tiny staircase in the turf.... At last reaching the bottom of the farther slope, we had to toil along the glacier, mile after mile, to the Cave. About a mile before our destination, the ice ceased, and in the flowing water the pilgrims had to bathe.

The Swami, exhausted, had by this time, fallen behind.... He came at last, and with a word, sent me on; he was going to bathe. Half an hour later he entered the cave. With a smile he knelt, first at one end of the semi-circle, then at the other. The place was vast, large enough to hold a cathedral, and the great ice-Shiva, in a niche of deepest shadow, seemed as if throned on its own base. A few minutes passed, and then he turned to leave the cave.

To him, the heavens had opened. He had touched the feet of Shiva. He had had to hold himself tight, he said afterwards, lest he should swoon away. But so great was his physical exhaustion

that a doctor said afterwards that his heart ought to have stopped beating, and had undergone a permanent enlargement instead. How strangely near fulfillment had been those words of his Master, "When he realizes who and what he is he will give up this body!"
[About the experience at Amarnath, the Swami said]: "I thought the ice-lingam was Shiva Himself.... I never enjoyed any religious place so much!"
Afterwards he would often tell of the overwhelming vision that had seemed to draw him almost into its vortex.... He always said ... that the grace of Amarnath had been granted to him there, not to die till he himself should give consent. And to me he said, "You do not now understand. But you have made the pilgrimage, and it will go on working. Causes must have their effects. You will understand better afterwards. The effects will come."[4]
Later in the fall, Swamiji would say to one of his disciples: "Since visiting Amarnath, I feel as if Shiva is sitting on my head for twenty-four hours and will not come down."[5]
Mrs. Patterson had recently left the group to join her husband, so that on her return to the party Nivedita had a boat to herself as they made their way to Srinagar. "The river," she wrote to a friend, "is like glass, and a slight breeze meets us in our leisurely progress. It is just like heaven."[6]

Joe's reminiscences continue:
We stayed in Kashmir four months, the first three in these simple little boats until after September, when it got so cold, we took an ordinary houseboat with fireplaces and there enjoyed the warmth of a real house. Sister Nivedita has written a good deal of the talks we had there. Swami would get up about half past five in the morning, and seeing him smoking and talking with the boatmen, we would get up too. Then there would be those long walks for a couple of hours until the sun came up warm; Swami talking about India, what its purpose in life was, what Mohammedanism had done and what it had not done. He talked, immersed in the history of India and in the architecture and in the habits of the people, and we walked on through fields of forget-me-nots, bursting into pink and blue blossoms, way above our heads.[7]
Sister Nivedita recorded for August 11: "There was occasion this day for the Swami to rebuke a member of this party for practising palmistry. It was a thing he said that everyone desired, yet all India despised and hated. Yes, he said, in reply to a little special pleading, even of character-reading he disapproved. Later ... he spoke with horror of the display of the least of it as sure to bring a terrible reflex[8]." In view of this, it is of note that neither Joe nor Sister Nivedita completely gave up palmistry interest, referring to it often over the years of their correspondence and getting at least one professional palm reading done by the famous Cheiro, who also read Swami Vivekananda's palm.
When Swamiji and his party had been in Kashmir in June, the Maharaja, knowing that Vivekananda wanted to find a good site for a monastery and Sanskrit college, invited him to look around and choose some ground. The site would have to be approved by the Council of Kashmir. The women found a nice area on the riverbank for camping; and when the swami saw it, he decided that this was the spot he wanted for the Math. The Maharaja of Kashmir approved his choice. Now in August, after Swamiji and Sister Nivedita returned from Amarnath, the three women became intensely motivated to meditate in solitude somewhere, and he suggested that they all go to the proposed Math site in Kashmir. It was auspicious, he thought, according to Hindu tradition, that the new homestead be blessed by women[9]. So this they did on about August 12.
In the meantime, Consul Patterson and his wife had invited Swamiji to be their guests at Dal Lake, so he went there on Saturday, August 20, returning the following Monday or Tuesday. Then he went up to what he referred to as "the new Math," and stayed near the women's campsite until he left for Ganderbal.[10]
On August 28 he wrote to Mary Hale: "I have been away a few days. Now I am going to join the ladies. The party then goes to a nice quiet spot behind a hill, in a forest, through which a murmuring stream flows, to have meditation deep and long under the deodars crosslegged *a la*

Buddha. This will be for a month or so, when by that time our good work will have spent its power and we shall fall down from the paradise to earth again....”[11]

[1] CWSN 1, pp. 343-44.
[2] CWSN 1, pp. 343-44.
[3] CW 9:105.
[4] CWSN 1:347-48.
[5] CW 7:129.
[6] Letters SN I, #6, p. 16. 70.
[7] Rems., p. 236.
[8] CWSN 1:351.
[9] Editorial, "Kshir bhavani, " PB, Aplril 1988, p. 123.
[10] CWSNl:356
[11] Life II, p. 377

ALL MOTHER NOW

Sister Nivedita had "grown Hindu in taste with alarming rapidity" since being at Amarnath. Swamiji also underwent a change of mood. His mind, which had been almost constantly on Shiva during the first three months of their pilgrimage, had, since his return from Amarnath, been almost entirely focused on the Divine Mother. He began singing the devotional songs of Ramprasad, written for the Mother; he meditated more and more on her; and he told the women that he was conscious of the presence of Mother now, as if she were a person in the room[1]. "Gradually," wrote Nivedita in *The Master*, "his absorption became more intense. He complained bitterly of the malady of thought, which would consume a man, leaving him no time for sleep or rest, and would often become as insistent as a human voice...."[2]

Then when he found out that the Kashmir Council had twice refused to place on its agenda his request for the site of land for the Math, he was baffled. "'The worship of the Terrible' now became his whole cry," Nivedita wrote. "He seemed to fasten his whole attention on the dark, the painful, and the inscrutable in the world, with the determination to reach by this particular road the One Behind Phenomena."[3]

Then one day he said that his brain was "teeming with thoughts" and that his fingers "would not rest till they were written down." And that evening he went to the women and presented his composition, "Kali the Mother." Afterwards they learned that "having written this poem in a fever of inspiration, he had fallen on the floor, exhausted with his own intensity."[4]

On September 30 Swamiji left for Kshir Bhavani, after first directing that he was not to be followed this time. Vivekananda passed a week there in austerities, offering milk, rice and almonds daily and worshipping a Brahmin Pandit's little daughter as Uma Kumari, the virgin aspect of the Divine Mother. Shailendranath Dhar has written in the *Comprehensive Biography of Swami Vivekananda*:

It seemed that he was determined to tear off the veils that had come upon him through his years of work in the West and elsewhere and again be just the Child of the Divine Mother. In the course of his sadhanas at this place, centering on the Terrible, while he was alone in the dark, living in a dingy cloister by the shrine of the goddess, he had many visions, about which he never spoke except to a few gurubhais. In the same shrine one day, he was brooding with pain on the dilapidated condition of the temple and wishing he could rebuild it when he heard the Mother Herself telling him: "My child! If I wish, I can have innumerable temples and magnificent monastic centers. I can even this moment raise a sevenstoried golden temple on this very spot." Another day, distressed to see the ruins of temples that had been desecrated by Muslim invaders of the past, he was wondering why the Hindus of the time had not laid down their lives to prevent it. He was saying to himself, "If I had been here then I would have laid down my life to protect the Mother." Immediately, he heard the Mother telling him, "What? Even if non-believers should enter my temples and defile my images, what is that to you? Do you protect me or do *I* protect you?"[5]

When he returned to the trinity on October 6, he was joyous and glowing, according to Nivedita, who wrote in *The Master*:

In the afternoon of that day we saw him coming back to us, up the river. He stood in front of the Dunga, grasping with one hand the bamboo roof-pole, and with the other holding yellow flowers. He entered our houseboat -- a transfigured presence, and silently passed from one to another blessing us, and putting the marigolds on our heads. "I offered them to Mother," he said at last, as he ended by handing the garland to one of us. Then he sat down. "No more 'Hari Om!' It is all 'Mother' now!" he said with a smile. We all sat silent. Had we tried to speak, we should have failed, so tense was the spot with something that stilled thought. He opened his lips again. "All my patriotism is gone. Everything is gone. Now it's only Mother Mother!

"I have been very wrong," he said simply after another pause. "Mother said to me, 'What, even if unbelievers should enter My temples, and defile My images! What is that to you? Do

you protect Me? Or do I protect you?' So there is no more patriotism. I am only a little child!"
...[Then before he left, he said to us]: "I may not tell you more now; it is not in order, but spiritually, *spiritually*, I was not bound down!"[6]
A week after Vivekananda's return, Nivedita wrote to a friend: "It is about 8 days since he came back, like one transfigured and inspired.... He simply talks, like a child, of 'The Mother' -- but his soul and his voice are those of a God.... He is *all* love now. There is not an impatient word, even for the wrongdoer or the oppressor, it is all peace and self-sacrifice and rapture. 'Swamiji is dead and gone' were the last words I heard him say."[7]
Swami Vivekananda and the women left for Baramulla, arriving there on Tuesday evening of October 11. During this period he was silent, rarely even visiting the women on their houseboat[8]. The next day, they left for Lahore. From Lahore, Joe and Sara were to begin a tour of some of the principal cities of Northern India, guided by Swami Saradananda. Nivedita was to travel part of the way with them and go on by herself to Calcutta. On October 13 she mentioned regretfully in a letter that at this point it was uncertain exactly when she would see Swamiji again[9]. In another letter written the same day, she expressed more fully the awesome effects that his Kshir Bhavani experience had had on him. She wrote: "He turned to us Sunday and said, 'These images of the Gods are more than can be explained by solar myths and nature myths. They are visions seen by true Bhakti. They are real.'"[10]
So ended the great pilgrimage. For the rest of their lives, the women would cherish its memory and hold close to them each impression their great teacher had so lovingly placed in their hearts. Though Nivedita, in particular, had suffered so much conflict with her guru during part of the pilgrimage, she did not seem to retain any bitterness. Joe once remarked that Nivedita's love for Swamiji was so deep that she did not keep any memory of the harshness she had suffered with him; she kept only the memory of his sweetness.[11]
In a letter Nivedita was to write to Joe some years later she would recall again the sweetness of that wonderful period of their lives and at the same time reveal Joe's own contentment. She wrote: "Ah for that divine year again! And yet I remember that the roads were common roads, the dust and water common dust and water. But within it all, so much, so vast a content! For how many centuries of lives do you think that will have to last? Well, as you said once, it is strange to find so much comfort in the thought that one knew the joy at the time."[12]
Joe's own reminiscences close out this period of her life. She writes:
Swamiji then sent for Swami Saradananda to come and travel with us, to show us the sights of India -- Lahore, Delhi, Agra, Kurukshetra, and so on, Swami going straight down to Calcutta. By the time we got down there, he had already founded the monastery in our little cottage at Belur. As we would not go back there, we took a small house about two miles up at Bally and stayed there until we left for the West.[13]

[1] CWSN 1:93.
[2] CWSN 1, p. 94.
[3] CWSN 1, p. 94.
[4] CWSN 1, p. 94.
[5] Comp. Biog., p. 1099. 80.
[6] CWSNl:97-98.
[7] Letters SN I, #9, p. 25.
[8] Life II, pp. 386-87. 83.
[9] CWSN 1:97-98.
[10] Letters SN 1, #10, p. 27.
[11] Life and Gospel, pp. 92-93.
[12] Letters SN II, #318, p. 698. (Probably written 1904.)
[13] Rems., p. 237.

HOLY PICTURES

Swami Vivekananda, travelling with his disciple Swami Sadananda, had reached Calcutta on October 18. He was very ill with asthma[1]. When Sister Nivedita arrived in Calcutta on the first of November, having left Joe and Sara on their tour, he first arranged for her to stay with the Holy Mother at 10/2 Bosepara Lane. About five days later Sister Nivedita took a little house at 16 Bosepara Lane,[2] and that became her permanent address.

On the sixth of November Joe, Sara, and Swami Saradananda arrived back in Calcutta. The new Math had not yet actually taken over the little river cottage at Belur, but the house was no longer available for the women to stay in because by this time construction on the monastery was almost completed. For a few days they stayed with Nivedita, then took a little house in Bally, mentioned in the last quoted section of Joe's reminiscences. On their first day in Calcutta, the women went by boat with Swami Vivekananda and were thrilled to see the progress made on the new monastery.[3]

It was while the two women were staying with Nivedita on Bosepara Lane that Sara arranged to have photographs taken of the Holy Mother[4]. Using correspondence to establish the probable time of the women's move to Bally, one can say that the photo session with Holy Mother must have taken place between November 7 and 10.

According to Swami Gambhirananda, writing in his biography of Sri Sarada Devi, Sara Bull one day went to the Holy Mother and asked her to consent to having her photo taken. The Holy Mother immediately declined because she was too shy to go to a studio and unveil her face in front of some *unknown* photographer[5]. Then Sara said to her, "Mother, I wish to take the photo to America and worship it."[6] Then the Mother consented, asking only that the photographer be a *woman*. Later, when it was reported to the Mother that no female photographer could be found, she then asked that the photographer at least be *European*.[7]

On the day the photos were taken, Mr. Harrington, an English photographer, arrived at the Mother's residence at 10/2 Bosepara Lane, and he took three photos of her. Later Sister Nivedita wrote about this history-making occasion, saying that it marked the first time any adult male outside the Mother's family had ever seen her face[8]. The Holy Mother was forty-five years old.

The second photo taken became the one considered the standard worship pose of the Holy Mother. The third photo was of the Holy Mother sitting with Sister Nivedita.

Certainly by the eleventh of November, Joe and Sara had established themselves in their new house at Bally, for on the twelfth Swami Vivekananda wrote to Joe, requesting a cook, which implies that she was no longer a guest herself. The swami wrote from Balaram's house, saying:

November 12, 1898
My Dear Joe,

> I have invited a few friends to dinner tomorrow, Sunday. Will you kindly send Rahim Bux (cook) tomorrow with some fowl, eggs and mutton to cook a dinner for them?
> He ought to come earlier.
> We expect you at tea. Everything will be ready then.
> Shri Mother is going this morning to see the new Math. I am also going there. Today at 6 p.m. Nivedita is going to preside. If you feel like it, and Mrs. Bull strong, do come.
>
> Ever yours in the Lord,
> Vivekananda[9]

As mentioned in this letter, the Holy Mother did visit the new Math site on this day, November 12. Joe, Sara, and Nivedita were there also. *The Life* states: "All the monks were present, and elaborate arrangements had been made for worship. The picture of the Master worshipped in

the Math had been taken to the new site; and the Holy Mother had brought her own picture of the Master. With special worship she blessed the place."[10]
Swamiji had also asked the Holy Mother to take part in the ceremonial opening of Sister Nivedita's Girls School on the following morning. *The Life* states: "After worshipping Sri Ramakrishna, the Holy Mother prayed that the blessing of the Great Mother of the Universe might be upon the school, and that the girls that it trained might be ideal girls."[11]
Once during their pilgrimage, Vivekananda had said of Indian women of the future, that if amidst their new task they would only remember now and then to say, "Shiva! Shiva!" it would be sufficient worship[12]. Joe remembered his dictum and for the rest of her life was often heard to repeat "Shiva! Shiva!"

[1] Life II, p. 391.
[2] Life II, p. 394.
[3] Sachindra Nath Basu, "Remi niscences of Swami Viveka nanda," translated from Ben gali by Swami Che ta nana nda , VK, Nov-Dec 1987, p. 473.
[4] Life II, p. 394.
[5] Swami Gambhirananda, Sri Ma Sarada Devi, p. 335.
[6] SNRV, p. 69.
[7] Swami Gambhirananda, Sri Ma Sarada Devi, p. 335.
[8] Letters SN I, #26, p. 76.
[9] "Letters of Swami Vivekananda," PB, April 1949, p. 141.
[10] Life II, p. 395.
[11] Life II, p. 395.
[12] CWSNl:313.

BELUR MATH

The Belur Math grounds had been consecrated the previous March of 1898. On December 9, the Math itself was formally consecrated. This brotherhood of monastic disciples, banded together through love for their guru, Sri Ramakrishna, and initiated into spiritual life by him, had remained together since his passing in 1886 under the leadership of Swami Vivekananda. Once the Master had told Swami Vivekananda (then Narendra), "I will go and live wherever it is your pleasure to take me, carrying me on your shoulders -- be it under a tree or in the humblest cottage!" On this day, the swami carried the urn containing his Master's ashes, leading a procession of his brother monks and monastic disciples along the bank of the Ganges, from Nilambar Mukherjee's garden house to the new monastery. A great ceremony was held, Swamiji himself leading the worship and lighting the sacrificial fire at which only sannyasins could be present. Then he addressed the monks, concluding with his famous prophecy: "This Math shall become a great centre of learning and spiritual practices. Pious householders will erect houses for themselves on the grounds round this future religious university and live there, with the sannyasins in the centre. To the south [of the grounds], the followers of the Lord [devotees] from England and America will come and make their abode!"[1]

Sara Bull had generously donated fifteen thousand dollars to Swamiji for the building of the Math. This gift was one-third of the amount given to him by devotees from England for the building[2]. Joe states in her reminiscences:

Mrs. Ole Bull had given several thousand dollars to found the monastery. I having very little, it took me some years to have eight hundred dollars. One day I said to Swamiji, "Here is a little money you may be able to use." He said, "What! What?" I said, "Yes." "How much?" he asked. And I said, "Eight hundred dollars." Instantly he turned to Swami Trigunatita and said, "There, go and buy your press." He bought the press which started *The Udbodhan*, the Bengali magazine published by the Ramakrishna Mission.[3]

It had been Swami Trigunatita's inspiration to have a Bengali journal, and Swamiji had encouraged him. As early as January of 1895 (the month Joe first saw Swamiji), he had written to his brother disciple, saying, "Thrust it on people and make them subscribe to it, and don't be afraid[4]." Again in 1896, he had encouraged him further; but it took Joe's gift of eight hundred dollars in the fall of 1898 to enable Vivekananda to say with finality to Swami Trigunatita, "There, go and buy your press." The first issue of *The Udbodhan* was published January 14, 1899. It continues to this day.

For the rest of her life Joe would do what she could to serve Swami Vivekananda's cause. Joe was original, and she did not limit her giving to monetary donations. She used her inner resources as "an ordinary woman" to help in diverse ways. While one cannot imagine Joe as a person who would use others for her own selfish ends, she clearly did not hesitate to use any pull or influence she might have to aid his work. It is said by Lizelle Reymond that Joe was able to use her family's social connections to approach English authorities and obtain certain privileges which would have been refused if requested by monastics. Reymond states, "She even succeeded in getting certain land concessions, so that Vivekananda could undertake the irrigation works and health schemes of which he had dreamed[5]." Later sections of this book will show the truth of that statement.

Joe also spoke up on behalf of Sister Nivedita. When she saw how pitifully bare a life the younger woman was now leading, she went to Vivekananda and complained, "What have you done with Nivedita?"

"Don't pity her!" Swamiji answered. "She is now, above everything, dedicated to India. Most of all, do not spoil her! I have devoted more time to her than to anyone else."[6]

And when Nivedita was attacked by certain progressive Hindu groups for the views she had made public in her writings on renunciation, it was Joe who, using new-found connections, quickly organized receptions in order to introduce her to intimate Brahmo-Samaj circles. It was through these influential contacts that Nivedita was able to convince others of her points of view and bolster the image she was trying to create for her Girls School.[7]

Joe's giving had a style of its own. In her unique way she too served the women of India. Once she explained her views of Indian women, saying:

Being an ordinary woman (and in that lies my strength), I know how little reading and writing have played in my life. But loving, doing, serving, talking -- are the natural ways of expression to me. Now all women have this, in India as elsewhere, only here [in India] their scriptures, their literature, their amazing ideals of different types of womanhood are written from their earliest childhood in their hearts. Their mind is parchment on which it is all engraved -- Savitri, Sita, Uma! What a trilogy! Now to tell them that reading and writing is higher than this (their own culture) isn't true: so there I stand, trying to put it in a way that doesn't *sound* reactionary![8]

On December 19 Swami Vivekananda left for Baidyanath for rest and recuperation. Since he was to be gone for a month, this was the last time Joe could have seen him before she and Sara Bull returned to the West. On December 29 he wrote to Sara: "Ere this I had only love for you, but recent development proves that you are appointed by the Mother to watch over my life; hence, faith has been added to love! As regards me and my work, I hold henceforth that you are inspired, and I will gladly shake off all responsibilities from my shoulder and abide by what the Mother ordains through you."[9]

During the Christmas season of 1898 the little household of Joe and Sara was filled with people and festivities. Nivedita came and stayed for a while using this time to write "The Story of Kali" for little Frances Leggett, now two years old. Holy Mother visited them on the 20th, and all the monks came in for Christmas Day. Then on December 30 the invitation was returned, and Sara and Joe were received by the monks at Belur before leaving for the West.[10]

Three days later, on January 2, 1899, Belur Math was occupied formally by the monastic brotherhood[11]. The little cottage which the three women had stayed in the previous spring had been remodelled by adding an upper floor, and this housed a number of the monks. In addition, a new building containing the Shrine and additional quarters had also been constructed.

Joe and Sara left Calcutta on January 3 or 4. On January 5 they left Bombay. Via Paris and London, they reached New York in early March. On February 7 Sister Nivedita wrote to her "Beloved Joy" (Joe), what must have been several pages, then added: "In meditation tonight the Mother said she saw Sara on her left and Joy in front all the time. Looking *so* well and happy."[12]

[1] Life II, p. 400.
[2] Culme-Seymour Coll., to Betty Leggett, May 24, 1922.
[3] Rems., p. 237. 103.
[4] CW6:296-97.
[5] Dedicated, p. 170.
[6] Dedicated, p. 172.
[7] Dedicated, p. 172.
[8] Culme-Seymour Coll. , May 1. 1923.
[9] CW6:417-18.
[10] Life II, p. 410.
[11] Life II, p. 409.
[12] Letters SN I, #18, p. 51.

WORK AND PLAY (Part One)

"She's my good luck, you know. When she is with me, everything goes well.... I shall have to bring Joe back. I can do nothing without her."

-- Swami Vivekananda,quoted by Sister Nivedita in a letter to Josephine MacLeod,May 1, 1899.

With the Divine Year now over and the trinity of Western devotees split up by sixteen thousand miles, more of Josephine MacLeod's personalityand character are reflected through the facile and adoring pen of Nivedita. Her letters, more than any other source, give a vivid picture of Joe, not only through Nivedita's own glowing words of love, but through her frequent verbatim quotes of Swami Vivekananda and others who also loved Joe. Sankari Prasad Basu's two-volume set of *The Letters of Sister Nivedita*, referred to previously, contains 802 letters written by Nivedita between 1898 and her death in 1911. *Of these, an astonishing 429 were addressed to Josephine MacLeod.*

Sister Nivedita's letters, composed in confidence to her beloved "Yum" or "Joy," have the intensity, frankness, and intimacy of a private journal. Indeed, she seemed to hold back nothing from Joe to whom she opened her heart week after week. It is also notable that her letters to Joe (as well as those written to Sara Bull) were often shared by "Yum" and "Saint Sara" with each other, giving an idea of how close these three actually were.

Joe and Sister Nivedita seem to have been completely candid with each other. Barbara Foxe, a biographer of Nivedita, has pointed out about her letters to Joe: "[Nivedita] was often buoyant in her enthusiasms, or totally castdown. Vivekananda had ... said 'the confession of weakness makes [one] weak', but she found relief in pouring out to Josephine MacLeod her own weariness and depression in what might be described as an occasional good grouse.... There is something that draws sympathy in seeing a friend whose entire life is dedicated to a cause, fighting against heavy odds for it, and in particular, fighting irritation and depression and lack of success. Joe MacLeod was sympathetic, and probably glad that Nivedita had 'someone to grouse to' occasionally."[1]

Sankari Prasad Basu has also observed about these letters of Nivedita to Joe: "Some people think Swami Vivekananda overly praised Joe MacLeod, but Nivedita was known for being highly judgmental and critical by nature, so through her letters we get a more objective view."[2]

We also see through these letters that Nivedita understood Joe very well; so it will be greatly through their correspondence that we shall travel over the next portion of Joe's life, extending from 1899 to Nivedita's death in 1911. And it may be that we shall begin to comprehend in how many ways the Divine Year had indeed been divine in its effect on Joe.

[1] Long Journey pp. 102-03
[2] Sankari Prasad Basu, "An Uncommon Woman, Family, and Swami Vivekananda," Yugantar, Annual edition, 1979.

DOING GREAT THINGS GREATLY

In the fall of 1898, E. T. Sturdy had written twice to Joe complaining mostly about how the London Vedanta work, of which he had charge, was not going so well due to the fact that those hundreds of devotees who had come round when Swami Vivekananda was there were now nowhere to be seen. In January of 1899 Joe and Sara were in London, and two important effects were the result of their spending time with many old London devotees and also with Sister Nivedita's family.

Joe, who was beginning to write on a weekly basis to Nivedita, (usually addressing her as Margot or Dearest Child), sent off a long letter on February 14 (St. Salutation Day), giving many details of her time with the Noble family and with other devotees. Nivedita's family had gotten its collective mind set at rest about their Margaret, off in India with the swami and all; and according to Sister Nivedita's later letters to Joe, what Joe had done for the cause of Vivekananda's work in London could not possibly be described[1]. Joe's letter mentioned her and Sara's visit to the Noble family home in Wimbledon with several present, including Nivedita's mother, sister, and brother. She wrote:

... Mrs. Bull was told to talk to all of your work and she did in such a way that they all said you had exactly found your scope and right work -- [that] Wimbledon was too narrow a field for you.

We have asked Mr. and Mrs. Hammond [*good friends of Sister Nivedita*] for tomorrow lunch quite alone -- and your mother, brother and sister come to us on Sunday for lunch....

... As for "mother" -- I just took her in my arms as I would my own.... I think she does not quite understand what any of us are doing! (I doubt if we know ourselves). But she says, she felt that "you had the call," and must go -- Swamiji's name was hardly mentioned....

Last night at the Sesame [Club] we saw [Lady Isabel Margesson] and Miss Margesson and they come today to our "tea party" for today we expect your friends in masses....

Mrs. Sturdy is too, most sympathetic to us and to the Prophet and now [that] she is sure of not losing her husband -- is radiant and says that they are waiting to welcome him to their homes. I do not think prestige has much to do with her feeling --- though it may be a tiny factor in her enthusiasm.

Hug every fool for me -- nothing less will express my feelings.[2]

It must have been when she and Sara had the Noble family to lunch that Joe had a private conversation with Nivedita's mother. During their talk Joe learned something about Margaret Noble that even Margaret did not know -- and something which shows that she was truly "Nivedita" -- "dedicated" even from birth. Later, Joe told Romain Rolland about it, and he recorded in his diary: "One day, finding herself alone with Miss MacLeod, [Nivedita's mother] confided in her timidly something she had never told her daughter or Vivekananda. 'When I was pregnant for the first time,' she said, 'I was anxious. I made a vow that if all went well I would dedicate my child to God. Never did my daughter or anyone else know. When, at 28 years of age, she came to tell me that she wanted to follow the instructions of the Swami, I knew that God spoke. I gave her all my support.'"[3]

Later in March, Sister Nivedita joyfully expressed her own gratitude for what Joe had done for the swami's London work. Apparently Joe had written to her, saying something like, "If only *I* could find some good work to do...." Nivedita shot back on March 5, 1899: "Doing good! Why I shd. think you ARE doing good! I must send Mrs. Hammond's letter when I have exhausted it if you want proof. And talk about eclat! You are being lionized!... How glad I am to think Darling that they have met you!"[4]

And on March 16 she wrote to Joe: "Why ... what you have done for the cause in London cannot possibly be described. It is tremendous. The thing is awake and alive again. I *knew* it wouldn't die[5]." Just a week or so before this, she had written to her London friend Nell Hammond: "How glad I am that you love [Swami and Joe] both. Which better? But between

them they fulfill so many needs, don't they? Only I am nearly as glad to be Yum's friend as to be Swami's daughter."[6]

During the next four months Swami Vivekananda's plans for returning to the West changed frequently. When he and Swami Saradananda returned to Calcutta from Baidyanath on January 22, there was a letter from Joe waiting for Swami Saradananda. Her letter was dated January 9 and expressed her intuition that probably Vivekananda would not go to the West for some time. On January 25 Swami Saradananda wrote to Joe, saying: "I hear from Margot that the Prophet is going to do just what you divined and expressed in your last. He is not going to the West for some time and is thinking of using the money (passage) for something else, I do not know what."[7]

However, on January 26, Swamiji himself, writing to Sister Christine, mentioned, "If I get well by March I am going to start for Europe[10]." He also confirmed this intention in a letter he wrote to Joe on February 2, 1899, which is quoted in full. In this letter one sees how much he valued Joe and how much faith he had in her ability to serve his work. This letter must have been waiting for her when she arrived back in New York in early March. He wrote:

February 2, 1899

My dear Joe,

> You must have reached N.Y. by this time [*meaning, by the time she received the letter*], and are in the midst of your own after a long absence. Fortune has favoured you at every step of this journey -- even the sea was smooth and calm, and the ship nearly empty of undesirable company. Well, with me it is doing otherwise. I am almost desperate I could not accompany you. Neither did the change at [Baidyanath] do me any good. I nearly died there, was suffocating for eight days and nights!! I was brought back to Calcutta more dead than alive, and here I am struggling to get back to life again.
>
> Dr. Sarkar is treating me now.
>
> I am not so despondent now as I was. I am reconciled to my fate. This year seems to be very hard for us. Yogananda, who used to live in Mother's house, is suffering for the last month and every day is at death's door. Mother knows best. I am roused to work again, though not personally but am sending the boys all over India to make a stir once more. Above all, as you know, the chief difficulty is of funds. Now that you are in America, Joe, try to raise some funds for our work over here.
>
> I hope to rally again by March, and by April I start for Europe. Again Mother knows best.
>
> I have suffered mentally and physically all my life, but Mother's kindness has been immense. The joy and blessings I had infinitely more than I deserve. And I am struggling not to fail Mother, but that she will always find me fighting, and my last breath will be on the battlefield.
>
> *My best love and blessings for you ever and ever.*
>
> *Ever yours in the Truth,*
> Vivekananda[10]

Shortly after this, Joe sent money for Vivekananda's passage to the West in care of Swami Saradananda, who was largely responsible for the financial affairs of the Math. Then in a letter to Sara Bull, written in March, she said, "I have advised Swamiji to come to the West *at once*," and told Sara that she had written to him that there was no means to carry out his Indian schemes just now, and that she hoped he would bring Swami Turiyananda with him.[10]

In early March Swamiji told Nivedita that he felt if he could go to the West and take Swami Turiyananda with him, it would be "a solid gain for he could leave the swami there to carry on the work somewhere." The problem was a lack of money. Nivedita then suggested that she write to E. T. Sturdy, asking him to release some funds that were being held for the swami's work and use that for Swami Turiyananda's passage. The swami agreed that she could appeal to Sturdy on her own. She then wrote to Joe, asking her to please back up the appeal to Sturdy, adding, probably for the sake of Joe's known frugality, "if telegrams from America are not too expensive."[11]

In the meantime Joe was also thinking about something else which involved Vivekananda's being in the West. Sister Nivedita mentioned in a letter written to Joe on February 21, 1899: "I

laughed quietly all through the first part of your letter with its sweet plans about Paris in 1900 -- which seems to be about as much concern of mine as the other side of the moon -- though I must say you give it a wonderfully life-like tone and air...."[12]

And Swami Vivekananda and Nivedita *would* go to Paris in 1900 just as Joe was even now, eighteen months ahead of time, considering. It must have been during her January 1899 Paris stopover with Sara that Joe spoke with her old friend Gerald Nobel about Swami Vivekananda. Nobel and the swami had met previously in 1895 during the time of Betty's wedding to Frank in Paris, and it was ever to be Joe's way of getting things done to drop quiet suggestions here and there to generate the possibility of certain events coming about. Once she said, "It is important for the Lord's work that certain people know one another[13]." So now perhaps she suggested that Gerald Nobel arrange to have Swami Vivekananda invited to give a paper at the Congress of Religions scheduled to be held during the big Paris Exposition in the fall of 1900. At any rate, that is what Gerald Nobel did. Sister Nivedita would also be at the Paris Expo, but right now in the winter of 1899 she was "laughing quietly" at the suggestion.

Three more references appearing in letters written by Nivedita to Joe during the winter months of 1899 give clues as to Joe's loving, gentle, and giving nature, qualities which endeared her to others. Through the first two references, one sees Joe through not only the eyes of Sister Nivedita but also Swami Vivekananda's disciple, Swami Sadananda.

February 21: "Sadananda's reference today to 'my sweet Mother, Miss MacLeod' went very deep. Oh I remember -- it was 'the tolerance that we find in you and my Sweet [Mother] MacLeod and our Granny [Sara Bull].'"[14]

February 22: "... how I wished you were here yesterday! A man came to me for sympathy and help and I was so cruel to him! I could have killed myself for it. He was a stranger and a poor weak thing at best and I was right in all I said, but he went away crying! Dear Sadananda -- such a saint in moments of stress and full of sympathy helped me to write him a letter and find out facts and all the rest. And I said to him -- 'If only it had been Miss MacLeod! She would have raised him too, and never hurt him.' 'Ah,' he said in such a tone! 'My sweet mother! If only such thing what she has would come to *you,* with the brain! -- but it *comes* not to people!'"[15]

March 2: "[For] my own part what am I to say to you? Oh, I don't know -- you are just like GOD and it's no use to say anything. Only this -- You have justified every deepest thing in my life for the last ten years by lifting this weight off my conscience -- everything -- I was always doubting that I had listened to false voices -- and now I feel as if it had just been the matter of the turning of a page -- and every step had been guided. Only I hope and pray that I may really be able to labour so well and wisely in *your* cause that you may never feel that you made a mistake. Not that you have that attitude towards it I know, for you just do great things greatly out of your own nature -- but for my part, I hope this, quite independently."[16]

Nivedita's reference to Joe's "doing great things greatly" may have referred to money and other items which Joe had begun sending to bolster her austere circumstances. From time to time in Nivedita's letters, she made references to one item or another that Joe had quietly sent her. "What can I say?" Nivedita wrote on March 16. "Just 'thank you.' How naughtily kind, but HOW kind. It's not the thing -- it's the LOVE and the THOUGHT and the real *pleasure* that touches one in *your* gifts[17]." And one week later she wrote again thanking Joe for the gloves, corsets, and scissors she had shipped.[18]

[1] Letters SN I, #30, p. 87.[2] Letters SN II, #84, app., pp. 1281-84.[3] Inde, May 13, 1927, p. 195.[4] Letters SN II, #784, p. 1256 addend.[5] Letters SN I, #30, p. 87.[6] Ibid., #26, p. 78.[7] Friends Coll.[8] New Disc., 5:5. 11[9] CW5:148-49.
. [10] New Disc., 5:5.[11] Letters SN II, #784, app., p. 1259.[12] Letters SN I, #20, p. 56.
[13] Culme-Seymour Coll., September 7, 1946.[14] Letters SN I, #20, p. 60. 17.
[15] Letters SN I., #21, pp. 60-61. 18.[16] Letters SN I., #27, p. 79.[17] Letters SN I, #30, p. 88.[18] Letters SN I., #31, p. 89.

SECOND MOTHER

To return to Joe's winter-to-spring life in 1899, she was living in New York City at the Leggetts' house. Correspondence indicates that not only was she not feeling well at this time, but she also had been charged with the care of her little niece Frances (also called Babe), now two years old. Betty and Francis Leggett were in London and Paris, and Joe held full reins. Alberta, who was now twenty-one, and Hollister, who was nineteen, were also living in the New York house at this time. The first thing Joe did was to replace Babe's nurse with an English governess. Her name was Ada Looker, and she was always known in the family as Miss Looker. Frances Leggett later wrote about her:

"Ridiculous," Miss Looker said, "the helplessness of the modern child." And she insisted that Babe learn to dress herself, button her own shoes (high-buttoned with a button hook) and wash her face. But what Babe minded was not riding anymore in her pram. It was her first remembered deprivation.[1]

In addition to her babysitting duties, Joe was kept busy following a number of instructions from Frank, delivered before he left New York and, later, from various spots on the Continent, about things that had occurred to him. Frances Leggett wrote in *Late and Soon*:

[Frank's letters to Joe] are full of instructions as to where to put the wine he has sent from Bordeaux, what kind of cook to engage for their return -- "she must be perfect in every dish save dessert for we shall never find one that excels in all" -- what are the duties of the new butler -- "the marble bust in the parlor should not be dusted in the regular way, must never be touched by handcloth or duster, but blown off by bellows or fan."... Even Babe's teeth are not forgotten -- "must be brushed twice a day whether she likes it or not". Such instructions Joe thoroughly enjoyed. In such matters she and Frank worked hand in hand. Joe could always be relied on to see things done.[2]

From time to time Joe was also visiting the Vedanta Society of New York and Swami Abhedananda. The swami mentioned her a number of times in his diary for the spring of 1899, indicating that she sometimes invited him to lunch. On March 14, he recorded that Joe had given him a copy of a photograph of the Holy Mother. Joe shared with the swami a letter from Sister Nivedita and undoubtedly brought him news of India through the letters she received from Swamis Vivekananda or Saradananda.[3]

On March 31, which was Good Friday, an informal meeting of the Society was held; and the program included a talk by Joe. Two days later, on Easter Sunday, she was also privileged to attend the ceremony (or perhaps just part of it) in which six students were initiated into *brahmacharya*, the first vows taken by monastics in the Ramakrishna Order. One of these was Cornelius Heyblom who was now given the name Gurudas Chaitanya, and who in later years went to India and received the final vows of *sannyas*, becoming Swami Atulananda[4]. He became another lifelong friend of Joe MacLeod, and one whose correspondence also gives a wealth of information about her.

In the meantime, in India, another initiation had taken place on March 25 for Sister Nivedita, when Swami Vivekananda gave her the vows of *naishthika brahmacharya*. A *brahmacharini* is a female novitiate who has been given preliminary monastic vows. Later that person may be given the final vows of renunciation, becoming a *sannyasini*. Nivedita had been given the vows of brahmacharya in the spring of 1898, and she had hoped to be given the vows of sannyas now. But a *naishthika* brahmacharini's vows are lifelong and are not meant to be followed later by full vows of sannyas. Being given the vows of naishthika brahmacharya was a disappointment to Nivedita, as expressed in her letters to Joe and Sara. She had wanted to be a full sannyasini.

Swami Abhayananda, (Marie Louise), a French woman who *had* received the final vows of sannyas from Swami Vivekananda at Thousand Island Park in the summer of 1895, had come to Calcutta, and was also staying with Nivedita. This might have been endured by Nivedita,

but Swami Abhayananda was full of complaints, snubs, and insults, and told Swami Vivekananda that she "could not live with that lady [Nivedita] -- that she was simply crazy." She also openly mentioned the fact that Sister Nivedita was not a sannyasini. Nivedita later wrote to Joe: "When Abhayananda left the room on Friday night for bed -- Sadananda turned and said 'Not one bit of interest or sweetness, Baba. But *we* are all Yum's children.' He said another time that he really could not work for people without love. He worked for you and the Granny [Sara Bull] as a child -- and for me as a brother -- but he could not find out any relation at all here [with Swami Abhayananda]."[5]

To Joe Nivedita wrote about the initiation itself, describing how the swami had spoken to her of Buddha, and how he had taught her to perform puja [worship], she saving for Joe a flower he had given her. Then the Swami Abhayananda had entered the scene during the fire sacrifice and they both had had breakfast with the monks. Nivedita wrote: "She does not really love Swami I think and she says that my love is very foolish and emotional.... I suppose the fact is that anyone can see that I worship him -- and that's the truth.... However, I do not want to go on like this, but to you I must let myself go.... I am only a Brahmacharini -- not a Swamy [Sannyasini]."[6]

Sister Nivedita did not leave the matter alone. One day in April she went to Vivekananda and asked, "What perfection could I strive for in order to be worthy of being a sannyasini?" He told her, "Just keep as you are!"[7]

[1] Late and Soon, p. 113.
[2] Late and Soon, p. 111.
[3] Swami Abhedananda, Complete Works, 10:87-92.
[4] Swami Abhedananda, Complete Works, 10:87-92..
[5] Letters SN I, #31, pp. 91-92. 26.
[6] Letters SN I, #33, pp. 95-96.
[7] Long Journey, p. 85; Life II, pp 449-50.

AN UNCOMMONLY CLEVER WOMAN!

In the next few months Sister Nivedita recorded in her letters to Joe some remarkable comments about Joe made by Swami Vivekananda. It is therefore of great interest that at the end of January, he confided to Sister Nivedita that the ability to size up women was a power that Sri Ramakrishna had passed on to him. In a letter to Joe, written January 30, 1899, Sister Nivedita wrote of what he had said and also shared one of his assessments of her. She wrote:

Swami, talking about [a young lady who had visited the girls school] said -- I know you love his exact words -- "She was the best you had there, Margot. I am never mistaken in my estimate of a woman.... That power of my Guru is passing over to me and I know at a glance."

...[Swamiji] was talking about something on Saturday and he said, "Oh, yes, Jo knew all about it." "Well," I said, "she was very discreet, for she never once mentioned it, Swami!" "Yes," he said. "Jo's an uncommonly clever woman."[1]

On April 8 Sister Nivedita wrote to Joe, mentioning Swami Sadananda's recent soliloquy about the two women's relationships with Vivekananda. He had begun by trying to explain why he felt like a son with Charlotte Sevier. Nivedita recorded:

En passant he alluded to you and me -- "Then you and Miss MacLeod -- I do not know -- I should say hers was higher. She is *friend* -- you are child. "It is a child!" [Swamiji] says when he is cross. But he and Yo Yo [Jo Jo] march shoulder to shoulder very well. What trust he has in her! When she had nettle rash I marked it. It was 'Oh Yo Yo! Oh *my* Yo Yo' in every room." There -- did you ever have such a tribute? Do you wonder that I nearly died of jealousy -- and then recovered by reflecting what an eternal misery it would have been if *I* had thought you the greatest woman I had ever seen and the King not recognised it!

Tonight he said -- "Oh if Mrs. Bull and Miss MacLeod wd. just come back and live in India men would be *inspired*. It is that *holiness* (in such a tone!) I know it well -- to have that sweet and gracious manner the mind and the soul must be also great!"[2]

On May 1 Sister Nivedita reported another remarkable conversation about Joe which she and Swami Vivekananda had recently had. She wrote:

On Friday I went to lunch - ... and sat at the King's right. Waiting for lunch, apropos of some lady he was maligning -- he said her intended husband had had a blessed escape, for she was "a thin spinster [*unmarried woman*]." Fat plump spinsters were good -- but thin, never. A certain thought leapt into my face, but I kept it tight behind my lips. "I know! You're thinking of Jo!" he said. "But she's not a thin spinster. She'll be quite plump one of these days -- She's my good luck, you know," he went on, walking up and down, and stopping near a window. "When she is with me, everything goes well, and I get plenty of success. In America she was with me -- and in England and everything was right. Then I came to India without her -- and nothing went well. But she came and everything -- and now she's gone, and the Math at a standstill and everything wrong. I shall have to bring Jo back. I can do nothing without her."

"Well, Swami," I said, making a light effort to [curry] favour -- "I wrote to her a fortnight ago begging her to come at once" --

"What for?" said he, turning on me fiercely, "to be grilled in this heat?" So I humbly suggested that he should go West and be with Yum in that way -- and he agreed that he would.[3]

Nivedita also reported in this letter that Swami Sadananda had recently slapped her wrist for daring to compare Sarala, who was a teacher at Nivedita's school and also a very proud, egotistic person, with "his most sweet mother -- Yum. *That* feeling she [Sarala] will NEVER get," he told Nivedita.[4]

Swami Vivekananda's health had small ups and great downs during the winter-to-spring period of 1899. Homeopathic remedies were tried but did not agree with him. As soon as he felt somewhat better in early April, he telegraphed to Swami Saradananda, who was in Western India, to return to Calcutta so that he (Vivekananda) could leave for the West. Sister Nivedita had written earlier to Joe, letting her know about Swamiji's poor health. Now, writing to her on April 8, she said, "I was sorry I had expressed my fears about the King [Vivekananda] to

Mr. Sturdy and yourself in such a way as to make them contagious perhaps. But Sadananda would not hear a word about it. If I could not speak freely to you, he would like to know, he said, with whom I could!... I got [Swamiji's] horoscope recalculated -- and it was a real comfort to hear that he has 9 years still to run of the influence of Jupiter -- that at present there is a troublesome planet causing loss of health and bereavement, but that the influence of this will expire on December 6th 1899, and that then he will enjoy fame and success such as he has never known."[5]

This explains why over the next several months, the date of December 6, would figure frequently in the correspondence between Sister Nivedita and Joe. Nivedita further commented about being a brahmacharini-for-life in a letter to Joe, written April 9, in which she shared Swamiji's reaction to a comment made by Joe in one of her letters. Nivedita wrote:

I read [Swami] bits of your letter today. He laughed over your dictum that "Poverty and Chastity were easy; Non-attachment would be your difficulty." He says my great fault is attempting too much. I am going to try to stifle my silly notions about conventual life ... for there does seem to be a certain work for me to do -- and it just flashed across my mind yesterday that *that* was truly ... Swami's reason for making me a Brahmacharini and not a Sannyasini."[6]

Sister Nivedita's meaning here seems to be that as a brahmacharini she would have freedom to continue her work, and to mix with the outside world.

In that same letter, a comment of Sister Nivedita reveals the extent to which she and Joe were bonded in the identity of Vivekananda's devotees, when she wrote about a conversation during which he had confided to her that his chest was always sore all over with neuralgia pain, and that he had not lost a certain side ache since he was ill. Nivedita wrote: "You can imagine how I said just what you would have said, darling Yum, till it suddenly struck me that it was you and not I talking to him."[7]

The closeness of Joe, Nivedita, and Sara was something observed by others too. On May 5 of that spring, Swami Swarupananda wrote to Joe about it and about Joe's special power. He told her:

I am so happy to receive your letter just when I finished writing to Granny telling her how after seeing you three I came to realize the higher meaning of relationship -- the relationships that a man who has gone beyond relations -- cut with his own hands the ties of blood etc -- could have and feel with a joyful heart. *I am sure you have a great message to deliver to the world. The great fund of love which you possess and the great tact with which you command the same fund and wield it to the greatest advantage -- gives you an invincible power for good*. That is what I have most felt in these few brief minutes I passed with you -- that is what made me call you "Mother."[8]

[1] Letters SN I, #l 7, pp. 44, 46. 29.
[2] Letters SN I, #35, p. 109.
[3] Letters SN I, #40, p. 128.
[4] Letters SN I, #40, p. 133.
[5] Letters SN I, #35, p. 106.
[6] Letters SN I, #36, p. 115.
[7] Letters SN I, #36, p. 114.
[8] Friends Coll.

SHE IS MY GOOD STAR!

In the meantime various events were conspiring to shape the circumstances under which Swami Vivekananda's second visit to the West would be made. Poor health had prevented his going earlier. Then had come plague in Calcutta, with its attendant relief work by the brothers of the Math and Sister Nivedita. Next he had determined not to leave for the West until the return of Swami Saradananda, whom he trusted most with the control of Math management during his absence.

Still plans changed. Swamiji decided to return to the West for a tour. Nivedita's sister, May (also known as Nim), was to be married in England on September 6, and he suggested that Nivedita go to attend the wedding, then stay in the West for some time and try to collect aid for her Indian work, but she refused. Then she received a letter from Joe making the same suggestion, and the entire plan suddenly gelled and stayed that way. Nivedita wrote back: "How funny that Yum really rules us from a distance! Swami suggested the same thing the other day -- for Nim's wedding, and I would not listen. And you speak! and it is done...."[1] "We would not dream of going against your wishes -- Lady Fair."[2]

And so it was that on the afternoon of June 20, 1899, the Swamis Vivekananda and Turiyananda and Sister Nivedita waved goodbye to a crowd of fifty people as the S. S. *Golconda* left the shores of Calcutta, headed for Madras, then England. The Holy Mother herself had provided that day a huge feast for the swamis. On June 19 Swamiji had given a farewell address to his brothers, and Sister Nivedita had closed out her little school for summer vacation, with plans in her head to earn more money in the West for the benefit of whatever future shape the work for women in India took.

Cable sent by Vivekananda to Josephine MacLeod as he sailed from Calcutta: "Started. Wire Sturdy."[3]

Those who have read Sister Nivedita's accounts of the six weeks she spent with the Swamis Vivekananda and Turiyananda on the S. S. *Golconda*, sailing from India to England in the summer of 1899, know that she considered it the "greatest occasion of her life[4]." These six weeks were *hers*. There were no other disciples around Swamiji; he was not bound down by any Math affairs or problems; he felt well most of the time and was happy and relaxed; he was filled with stories and teachings; and, surrounded by nothing but miles and miles of ocean, he was perhaps at his most frank, open, and free. Day by day she listened, absorbed, and reflected on what he said or did not say. Then she wrote. She wrote and she wrote, and her diary of those cherished days is one of the great treasures she left for the world of devotees. Vivid, dramatic, and filled with verbatim renderings of Swamiji, her accounts could be compared with *Inspired Talks*. In *The Master as I Saw Him*, his *Golconda* talks are recorded in their entirety; and they will be referred to only briefly here.

Aside from the brilliant diary Nivedita kept during this period, she also continued to write to Joe, and in those letters she included conversations with Swami Vivekananda, which provide a remarkable picture of his view of "Jo Jo" and the relationship between her and Sister Nivedita. Excerpts follow:.

June 25: "He says it will be a funny thing if he can't persuade you to join him in England on some excuse -- otherwise he will have to come to America. Then he said other people, Mrs. Bull, or I or others, might lecture him for hours on a difficulty showing him various ways out -- and produce no effect -- but if you came in and said 'Why! That's nothing!' an electric shock went through him and everything was different. 'Oh she is my good luck' he said. Then he explained to me that the difference between you and everyone else lay in the fact that others had matured since he had met them -- but you were 'fully developed' before he ever saw you. Then he spoke of 'the strength in that little body,' of the love -- and of the power to suffer. The last astonished me -- and he said that he had made you shed torrents of tears many a time by the outrageous things he had said to you. Had I not yet found out that where he loved most he scolded most?"[5]

June 28: “Oh, Yum, if I can be of one little bit of use to him that way, I won’t want anything -- not even to be you!”[6]
July 19: “Oh dear -- I dread the moment when we touch England, and this long rapture of worship must end -- as if I were a bud that must be violently open then, to give to others what I would fain gather up for one alone. How selfish! I am ashamed to say these things, but I know that in your infinite patience Dearest -- you will find room even for this.
“[Swami] wants me to get money [in the West] and come back -- ‘Quick’ -- and all visiting must be over, etc. till I took out what I have written to you, and send it to him. That seals it, doesn’t it! I know you’ll look at it his way. And when you and S. Sara come back *you* will do the ‘link’ work. You can do it anyway -- far better than I. The King [Vivekananda] himself one day speculated about how if you were here you would put [on] a new gown and ‘make everyone mashed!’
“... Yum -- you and S. Sara have given me *this* [love and strength] just as much as the King. He gives the new life -- but you gave the detachment. He comes and I ask him for a message [to you]. He looks like a cross baby for a minute, and then says ‘I don’t find any message.’ ‘All right Swami I’ll tell her *that*,’ -- I said and he smiled -- the sweetest smile -- instead!”[7]
July 21: “Dearest Joy -- the King fancies that you may be hurt when you find how far I have left all that you would choose for me, out of my calculations. But I laughed the idea to scorn. I know that you and S. Sara will help everyone, whom you do help at all, not to utter just what *you* think best, but to be real Self.
“I hope I may never have a new gown made for me in my whole life again. Of course I’ll be formal in your frocks if you wish it, if I come to Ridgely.
“What a treasure of a note book I am gathering together now! I’ll make you dance! Yesterday in Naples, he talked about you and how you had knocked about the world together. ‘And we’re just going to begin again now,’ he said -- ‘We’re just starting on another jaunt.’”[8]
Years later Sister Nivedita would recall the swami’s prophecy, made in Naples, about wandering around the world with Joe, and how it came true.[9]
On July 31 Swamiji and his party arrived in England. Two of his American disciples, Christine Greenstidle and Mary Funke, were there to greet him, having sailed from the States just for the occasion. Three days later, he wrote to Joe from Wimbledon:

August 3, 1899
My Dear Joe,

> We are in at last. Turiyananda and I have beautiful lodgings here. Saradananda’s brother is with Miss Noble and starts Monday next.
> I have recovered quite a bit by the voyage. It was brought about by the exercise on the dumb-bells and monsoon storms tumbling the steamer about the waves. Queer, isn’t it? Hope it will remain. Where is our Mother, the Worshipful Brahmini cow of India? She is with you in New York, I think.
> Sturdy is away, Mrs. Johnson and everybody. Margo is rather worried at that. She cannot come to U.S. till next month. Already I have come to love the sea. The fish Avatara is on me, I am afraid -- good deal of him in me, I am sure, a Bengali.
> How is Alberta, ... the old folks and the rest of them? I had a beautiful letter from dear Mrs. Brer Rabbit; she could not meet us in London; she started before we arrived.
> It is nice and warm here; rather too much they say. I have become for the present a Shunyavadi, a believer in nothingness, or void. No plans, no afterthought, no attempt, for anything, *laissez faire* to the fullest. Well, Joe, Margo would always take your side on board the steamer, whenever I criticised you or the Divine cow [Sara Bull]. Poor child, she knows so little! *The upshot of the whole thing is, Joe, that there cannot be any work in London because you are not here. You seem to be my fate!* Grind on, old lady; it is Karma and none can avoid. Say, I look several years younger by this voyage. Only when the heart gives a lurch, I feel my age. What is this osteopathy, anyway? Will they cut off a rib or two to cure me? Not I, no manufacturing of [woman] from my ribs, sure. Whatever it be, it will be hard

work for him to find my bones. My bones are destined to make corals in the Ganga. Now I am going to study French if you give me a lesson every day; but no grammar business -- only I will read and you explain in English. Kindly give my love to Abhedananda, and ask him to get ready for Turiyananda. I will leave with him. Write soon.

With all love etc.,
Vivekananda[10]

Joe would have received this letter at Ridgely, where she, Betty and the children were spending the summer. Her presence was helpful to Swamiji: this was surely all she needed to know.

On the same day that Vivekananda wrote to Joe, Nivedita also wrote to her about The Sturdy Problem. She commented that she was sure Swamiji would not allow E. T. Sturdy to manage his schedule in London this trip, and quoted the swami as saying, "You know I am always best when I strike for myself." Then she told Joe:

He quoted again that Sanskrit definition of a friend -- "In pleasure as in pain -- in goodness as in wrong doing -- at court or by the grave -- in heaven and in hell." He said you and S. Sara were *that* but even *he* couldn't have more than a dozen such! But when I begged him ... to go at once to America -- cutting off from me, and only to come back to his English disciples when he had you behind him, he said, "at the beginning it would have been the time to think," meaning, when he first took them for disciples he might have been permitted to see their faults, not now. *And of you he said, "You know I have told you -- she is my good star* -- but she is broken up. She must rest. She will not rest long -- neither she nor I *can* do that, and she strains every nerve to find me the money I want. She must not do that. I will not be a burden."

... You are wonderful Yum, or you could not remain happy in Western life. It is a prison.[11]

On August 12 Sister Nivedita wrote to Joe again, crediting her with having taught her how to love. She wrote: "There, Yum -- that is where I have got to -- the one yearning feeling in my love now is to take in every soul that he has ever looked on -- and love it and serve it to the end -- and you 'who passed that way huge times ago' -- have brought me there."[12]

Then on August 17 Sister Nivedita wrote to Joe again, acknowledging receipt of a letter from her in which she had apparently confided to Nivedita a very spiritual dream she had had. Nivedita wrote:

... [Your] divine letter is here. Oh that dream about the "real name!" I am longing to get to you, and tell you many many sacred things I could not tell in letters -- a word here -- a hint there -- and one -- most precious of all -- about this real name.

There is nothing worth doing -- save to worship him.

There is no place worth having -- save that of the dust upon his feet. You will worship him for me -- as I have done for you all this time -- when he reaches you.[13]

Swami Vivekananda's two-week visit to London did not appear to be very successful, except for his establishing contact with Sister Nivedita's family. It is ironic that two Americans had travelled the Atlantic just to be there to meet him, yet those Londoners who most easily could have had his company were noticeably absent. His disappointment was apparent, but he did not give up on the possibility of success in the London area. In a letter written August 19 to Joe, Sister Nivedita quoted Swamiji as saying: "When I come back to London, Margot, let it be as though I had never been here to do a stroke of work. That is the only way -- but we shall do great things here for all that." Nivedita then commented: "Work like this requires persons like you and myself who have no other object or thought in life. The Householder Disciple is always a failure, when he leads. As follower he does very well[14]." And on September 1, she again wrote to Joe: "Oh, Yum, isn't it just heaven to be you and me!!!"[15]

[1] Letters SN I, #44, p. 146. 37.[2] Letters SN I, #45, p. 155.[3] New Disc., 5:66.[4] SNRV, p. 93.[5] Letters SN I, #51, p. 169.[6] Letters SN I, #52, p. 173.[7] Letters SN I, #58, pp 184-87.[8] Letters SN I, #59, pp. 188-90.[9] Letters SN II, #380, p. 769.[10] CW8:464-66.
[11] Letters SN I, #60, pp. 191-93.[12] Letters SN I, #62, p. 196.[13] Letters SN I, #64, pp. 199-200.[14] Letters SN I, #65, p. 201.[15] Letters SN I, #68, p. 207.

THE STURDY PROBLEM

The previous fall (1898) when Joe was still in India, she had written to E. T. Sturdy twice, advising him of the possibility of Swamiji's returning to the West with her and Sara. She had obviously wanted to make sure that if the swami were hosted by the Sturdys, he would be granted the freedom she would give him if he were in her home. Sturdy had answered on October 18, 1898: "I understand thoroughly all that you write about Swami. I know exactly the complete absence of interference with which he should be allowed to live in whoever's house he may dwell, and how much congenial companionship helps him. He would have all that freedom in my house[1]." However, by the time Vivekananda arrived in London, Sturdy had gone to Wales[2].

Absent from the scene also was Henrietta Muller, who had publicly declared her own defection from Swami Vivekananda the previous winter, while she was still in India[3]. Another absentee was Ethel Jonson. Both women were of the opinion that no spiritual person ought to be ill, as Vivekananda was. Ethel Jonson also disapproved of his smoking[4]. Sturdy had decided that Swami Vivekananda and his brother disciples were poor representatives of Eastern asceticism. Sturdy soon showed his hand by writing letters to Sister Nivedita which listed many complaints about Swami Vivekananda. Forwarding his letters to Joe at Ridgely, Nivedita suggested that she finesse the situation, thinking it out first as to what the swami's course of action or reply should be, and passing along Nivedita's own suggestions on the stand he should take[5]. But Joe could only be direct with Swamiji. Their relationship was open and free. So when he arrived at Ridgely she simply showed him the letters[6]. This opened up a stream of correspondence that autumn between Vivekananda and Sturdy, at the end of which the swami wrote:

I need not tell you of Mrs. Bull, Miss MacLeod, Mr. and Mrs. Leggett. You know their love and kindness for me, and Mrs. Bull and Miss MacLeod have been to our country, moved and lived with us as no foreigner ever did, roughing it all, and they do not ever curse me and my luxuries either; they will be only too glad to have me eat well and smoke dollar cigars if I wish. And these Leggetts and Bulls were the people whose bread I was eating, whose clothes were covering my back, whose money bought my smokes and several times paid my rent, whilst I was killing myself for your people, when you were taking *my pound of flesh* for the dirty hole and starvation and reserving all this accusation of luxury.

See Sturdy, those that have helped or are still helping have no criticism, no curses: it is only those who do nothing, who only come to grind their own axes, that curse, that criticise.[7]

Considering the many insults E. T. Sturdy hurled on Vivekananda, and considering Joe's love for Swamiji, it may seem curious that she could somehow remain on friendly terms with Sturdy. Swami Vivekananda once said that *the difference between Sara and Joe was that Sara loved his disciples and friends through him, whereas Joe loved them directly, as apart from him.* About this, Joe once wrote to Sister Nivedita, "This is the reason I am bound to hold Mr. Sturdy, for I bear a personal relation to him that no one can alter."[8]

However, she also succinctly sized up what he had done when she remarked: "Poor Sturdy! You've tried to limit the Limitless by your little yard measure -- & you couldn't even come to the knee!"[9]

[1] Friends Coll.
[2] New Disc., 5:66.[3] Letters SN I, #ll, p. 27.[4] Letters SV, p. 393.[5] Letters SN II, #785 addend., p. 1261-62 .[6] New Disc., 5:82-83.[7] Letters SV, p. 400.
[8] Friends Coll., December 15, 1899.
[9] New Disc., 4:177.

RIDGELY: A FAVORED PLACE

Swami Vivekananda set sail from England on August 17 for the ten-day voyage to New York. Swami Turiyananda, Christine Greenstidle, and Mary Funke were with him. As soon as she received word of this, Joe wrote to Sara Bull, filling her letter with details of how they should meet in the city, and come back to Ridgely with the two swamis. "*Do not* tell Mrs. Crossley a *word*," Joe warned. "Let her stay in Princeton so we can have our Prophet without *one* thorn or criticism -- in all his *holiness*. I think I may keep Miss Stumm over -- she has her worth. I am in *Heaven*."[1]

In a second letter to Sara, Joe relayed even more detailed instructions on dates and times for meeting Swami Vivekananda. Joe was usually content to "get the gist" of other people's ideas and plans, but when it came to plans of her own, she filled her letters with underscored details. She who usually loved planlessness would leave nothing to chance when it came to meeting Swamiji. However, it happened that Sara's daughter, Olea Vaughan, fell ill and Sara needed to remain in Cambridge. It was to be six weeks before she came to Ridgely, Olea arriving later. Then, the swami's ship steamed into New York harbor two or three hours earlier than scheduled, so Betty and Joe were not there to meet him after all[2].

It was Joe who had dreamed of watching Vivekananda stride majestically down the gangplank, his face breaking into radiance at the sight of old friends, but it was Maud Stumm and two other New York devotees who had that privilege[3]. Still, Joe was remembered first by Swamiji when he landed, as Maud Stumm's reminiscences state: "As Swami landed with Turiyananda from the steamer, he was carrying most carefully a big bottle wrapped in papers that were torn and ragged; this precious bottle, which he refused to relinquish before reaching Binne-water, contained a wonderful kind of sauce like curry; brought thus by hand from India. 'For Joe!' he said...."[4]

After a quick stop at the Leggetts' house on Thirty-fourth Street, the swamis were taken on to Ridgely. It is not known when Christine Greenstidle and Mary Funke said their good-byes, but it is apparent that they did not go to Ridgely, as Joe was not to meet Christine until 1910.[5]

This was Swamiji's third and final visit to Ridgely, and it was Swami Turiyananda's first taste of America. There were many Leggett relatives and friends at Ridgely during this period, and they were housed in the various buildings over the property. The two swamis were in the Little Cottage, which was later referred to by Joe as "Swamiji's Cottage." It is a five-minute walk from the main house, Ridgely Manor, and has two storeys and several rooms. On the first floor are two sitting rooms with fireplaces, a dining room, a large kitchen, a small laundry room, and a large room in the back, added as part of the enlargement carried out by Francis Leggett. There are five bedrooms on the second floor.

When Swamiji told Joe that he liked to use the second sitting room for his meditation, sitting on the floor, she immediately ordered a small window to be cut into the east wall at sitting-on-floor level. In later years, the little window was covered over on the inside, but it is still visible from the lawn.[6]

In addition to the little window, Joe had a meditation bench made for Swamiji.[7] This bench, with its crescent shape, was apparently tailored for arm- or elbow-resting. The bench is still at Ridgely.

Good host that she was, Betty went to check on arrangements for the swamis and found Swami Turiyananda's mattress and bedding on the floor. When she asked him about it, he replied, "You see, I cannot bring myself to sleep on the same level with Swamiji, so I have put the mattress on the floor." Marie Louise Burke points out that Betty did not realize the relationship between the two swamis, thinking that Swami Turiyananda must be Vivekananda's disciple, such was his reverent attitude toward him[8]. Swami Chetanananda believes that this incident indicates that the two swamis must have shared one bedroom. "Swami Turiyananda's concern

for sleeping at a level lower than Swamiji," he explains, "would not have arisen if they had been in separate rooms."[9]

Hollister Sturges and a number of his cousins and friends stayed in the five-room apartment above the stables, and the Whitmarsh family, who always spent summers at Ridgely until just after Labor Day, stayed in the Inn.

In Ridgely Manor were the Leggetts, Joe, Alberta, baby Frances, who was almost three years old now, and her governess, Miss Looker, plus others who came for short or long visits. Dr. Helmer, a famous New York osteopath, was brought there to diagnose and treat Swamiji[10]. Professor Joseph Marchand, of France, had come to help him and the Leggetts with their French, in preparation for going to Paris in the summer of 1900. The professor had spent the summer of 1897 at Ridgely also[11]. Professor Marchand became quite ill, however, and despite the best medical care died while at Ridgely. Once when Joe went into his room he declared with great emphasis, "This is the house of God."[12]

[1] New Disc., 5:107.
[2] Ibid., pp. 108-09.
[3] Rems., p. 264.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Letters SN II, #675, p. 1095.
[6] Interview with Magdalena Sturges and Viscount Marges son, July 27, 1990.
[7] Interview with Magdalena Sturges, July 17, 1990.
[8] New Disc., 5:112.
[9] Interview with Swami Chetanananda, December 14, 1992.
[10] Life II, p. 483.
[11] Friends Coll., Josephine Mac Leod to Mary Hale, July 19, 1897.
[12] Late and Soon, pp. 114-15.

GOLDEN DAYS AND VELVET NIGHTS

In September Betty Leggett wrote to Sara Bull: "We are having such privileges as only Swamiji can confer. His talks are intermittent -- his health improving, his nights restful & he sleeps wonderfully.... These days are priceless."[1]

Joe, lover of freedom as she was, knew how to give others that same freedom, and one sees in her memories of Swamiji that he was always given unlimited personal space and that he thrived on it. Joe once stated about hosting: "[One's guest] must be free to go or come; or stay, or do or not do -- just let the mood be followed, since you know he is *true*. It was that attitude in our family towards Swamiji that kept him with and near us. Days without speaking, days and nights continuous speaking! We followed his moods and kept ourselves busy in our own lives and happy when he wasn't about, so that there was no sort of weight put upon him...."[2]

Maud Stumm later wrote the following vivid reminiscences of the swami's days at Ridgely:

The air of freedom seemed to do him good -- and such talks, such wonderful sermons! With his flame-colored robes draped about him, what a figure he was as he strode the lawns of Ridgely!... There was a compelling majesty in his presence and carriage that could not be imitated or described....

Nearly every day Swami was wonderful in a new way! And now it would be music that he dwelt upon, now art, and once he burst into the morning-room, declaring for "liberty": "What do I care if [Muhammad] was a good man, or Buddha! Does that alter *my* own goodness or evil? Let us be good for our own sake on our own responsibility! Not because somebody way back there was good."[3]

Swami Vivekananda's constant note that fall, as it had been on the *Golconda*, and as it had been even earlier on pilgrimage with Joe, Sara, and Nivedita, was that of standing alone. "Man-making" he called it. Joe, writing to Sara on September 3, mentioned his theme of developing one's good character for one's own sake. She wrote: "Swamiji is blessed and has his new message ready -- that all there is in life is *character*, that Buddhas & Christs do more harm than good -- for mankind is trying to imitate them -- instead of developing its own character! Oh it is grand & thrills one -- that 'in one's greatest hour of need *one stands alone*.'... He is indeed a Prophet with a new message!"[4]

This was one of the greatest periods in Joe's life. Indeed, according to her niece Frances Leggett, this visit to Ridgely had been planned the previous year while the little trinity of devotees had been in Kashmir with Swamiji. Joe, she later stated, "strove to make Swamiji the focal point of the family existence ... [and] it was in this time [at Ridgely] that the central drama of her life was being enacted." As the bottle of curry sauce had been carried so carefully for Joe, so every moment of this fall belonged intrinsically to her.[5] In her book, *Late and Soon*, in which she recorded much of her family's history, Frances Leggett wrote:

Oh, the golden days and velvet nights and walks under the stars barefooted on the dewey grass and talks of God and the human soul -- and last hours' gatherings in the Hall, doors open to the summer night, while song of crickets interpenetrated the Swami's rolling sentences that none dared answer as one by one they crept silently to bed. But an interlude, of course; but a foretaste of great happenings. A mighty movement had been set in motion, one that would outspan their personal lives as God Himself seemed to walk and talk with them ... but still in a special way for Joe those hours were sweet and they would not come again.[6]

In early September Swami Vivekananda telegraphed to Swami Abhedananda, who was lecturing at Green Acre, Maine, to come to Ridgely. He arrived there on September 8, joined Vivekananda and Turiyananda in the Little Cottage, and stayed until September 17 or 18 before returning to New York[7]. Sister Nivedita arrived in New York City on September 19. Joe was there to meet her, and the following day they went to Ridgely[8]. Joe, continuing her reminiscences, writes:

In July 1899 Swami came to England again with Sister Nivedita, where Sister Christine and Mrs. Funke met him. From there he came to America and he came to us at Ridgely Manor in

September of that year where we gave him his own cottage with two of his monks, Turiyananda and Abhedananda. Sister Nivedita was also there, and Mrs. Ole Bull. It was quite a community of people who loved and honored the Swami. He used to call my sister, Mrs. Leggett, "Mother", and always sat beside her at table. He particularly liked chocolate ice cream, because "I too am chocolate and I like it," he would say. One day we were having strawberries, and someone said to him, "Swami, do you like strawberries?" He answered, "I never tasted them." "You never tasted them, why you eat them every day!" He said, "You have cream on them -- pebbles with cream would be good."[9]

On her way from England, Sister Nivedita had written to Joe about her own diary. Her letter, referring to what would eventually become *The Master as I Saw Him* and *Notes on Some Wanderings,* reflected the great trust she had not only in Joe as her friend and a real devotee of Swamiji, but Joe as a critic, fit enough to judge the literary content of what Nivedita knew must be of the highest standards. She also made Joe a partner in the project. She wrote: "[Re the Diary] ... I look to YOU to go through it with me word by word and cut. No one else's judgement must speak, in our first revision. *Then,* when I am sure that in your judgement all is well, I can venture to stand by it before others, and hear it criticised."[10]

On September 21, the day after Nivedita's arrival, she modeled at Joe's request a fashionable dress which Joe thought would be appropriate for lecturing in America. The question of what she should wear had become a painful thorn to Nivedita, and she decided to put the question to Swamiji. That same day Joe wrote to Sara Bull, reporting: "He put the decision entirely into Margot's care and she said, 'If I may do as I choose, I shall wear my brahmacharini gerua[11] *always* -- while on the platform -- black otherwise.'"[12]

Later that day Sister Nivedita expressed to Vivekananda her desire to have some real solitude at Ridgely. It has been said that he composed for her that very evening a special poem entitled "Peace[13]." Actually, he had composed this poem two days earlier, dedicating it to Sara Bull, and had sent a copy of it to Sister Christine this same day (September 21).[14] Though the palatial environment of Ridgely did not suit Sister Nivedita, she stayed in a bedroom of the Manor house for one month, then moved to the Inn (vacated after Labor Day by the Whitmarsh family) for private retreat[15].

Joe's reminiscences continue:

In the evening, sitting around the great fire in the hall of Ridgely Manor, [Swamiji] would talk, and once after he came out with some of his thoughts a lady said, "Swami, I don't agree with you there." "No? Then it is not for you," he answered. Someone else said, "Oh, but that is where I find you true." "Ah, then it was for you," he said, showing that utter respect for the other man's views. One evening he was so eloquent, about a dozen people listening, his voice becoming so soft and seemingly far away; when the evening was over, we all separated without even saying goodnight to each other. Such a holy quality pervaded. My sister, Mrs. Leggett, had occasion to go to one of the rooms afterward. There she found one of the guests, an agnostic, weeping. "What do you mean?" my sister asked, and the lady said, "That man has given me eternal life. I never wish to hear him again."[16]

While he was at Ridgely, Swami Vivekananda would always go for a morning walk. Katherine Whitmarsh mentioned it in recalling her family's annual stays at Ridgely. In the fall of 1899 she was two years old, her brother Karl about four. But her mother over the years told and re-told her about how the swami would walk the grounds of Ridgely, stopping to watch the children play in the front-yard of The Inn. Her account follows:

Swamiji used to take a walk every day ... down the drive to the Casino, then beyond the lawns to a great old oak, which was one of the most beautiful trees you've ever seen. It was at a ... crossroads, and it was referred to later as Swamiji's Tree. He used to sit and meditate under that tree.... Then he would go down to the Inn where we used to stay each summer. My mother said he would often stop if my brother and I were playing, and he was very amused and would give us pennies....[17]

In the third week of September Dr. Helmer came to Ridgely, saw Swami Vivekananda, and immediately diagnosed his problem. Joe wrote to Sara that he had kidney trouble caused by a spreading of the spine, and added, "Smoking is to be reduced to nothingness (Nirvana!)."[18]
Still, Vivekananda was happy at Ridgely, writing to Mary Hale that he felt "perfectly at home." "You know Joe Joe of course," he wrote. "I marred [her and Sara Bull's] visit to India with my constant break-downs, and they were so good, so forgiving. For years Mrs. Bull and she have been my guardian angels.... I tried to play golf the other day; I do not think it difficult at all -- only it requires good practice...."[19]
Though it has been thought that Swami Vivekananda first tried his hand at golf during his first visit to Ridgely in the spring of 1895, it is probable that Ridgely did not have golfing facilities at all until 1899, and then perhaps only four or five holes laid out on the lawns. The previous April, Frank had written to Joe, apparently in response to one of three suggestions she had made to him about things he might do: "I am quite willing to have golf links at our country place, and I think Willie Gordon would be the one to arrange it for us, as he would do it or have it done with less expense & with less sacrifice to crops than someone not interested in us[20]." In addition, one thinks that in his letter quoted above, Swami Vivekananda's statement, "I tried to play golf the other day," indicates a *first* attempt at the game.
There is also a possibility that Swamiji's first attempt at playing golf took place at the Mohonk Mountain House Golf Course in New Paltz, about ten miles from Stone Ridge. This golf club had been established in 1897, and Frank Leggett sometimes treated his guests to long carriage rides to that area[21]. There are no golf facilities at Ridgely now.
We believe, then, that the following incident, as described by Paul Sturges and recorded by Marie Louise Burke in *New Discoveries*, Volume III, took place this fall of 1899 rather than the spring of 1895. Swami Vivekananda had never seen golf played before, and seeing a little flag in the ground, he asked Hollister Sturges why it was there. Hollister explained the game to him. Then, according to *New Discoveries*:
[Hollister] told Swamiji that par for that particular hole was four, and seven or eight for beginners. Swamiji smiled. "I will make you a bet," he said. "I shall put the ball in the hole with one stroke." Hollister produced fifty cents, Swamiji took a dollar from his pocket. At this point Mr. Leggett appeared and asked what these two were plotting. Being told, he informed Swamiji that what he proposed was an impossibility even for good players. "What is your bet?" Swamiji said. Mr. Leggett took a ten dollar bill from his wallet, and the bet was made. Swamiji told Hollister to stand by the hole -- not too close. Hollister took his position. Swamiji pulled up the sleeves of his robe, looked intently at the flag, and swung at the ball. It entered the hole. When Mr. Leggett was able to speak, he said, "Has your yoga got something to do with it, Swami?"
"I don't use yoga for so trifling a thing," Swamiji replied. "What I did I will tell you in two sentences. First, I measured the distance by sight, and I know the strength of my biceps. Second, I told my mind that I would be richer by ten dollars and a half. And then I swung[22]."
One day when Swamiji and Alberta were seated in the Hall of Ridgely Manor, little Frances Leggett came in, holding flowers in her hand, and gave them to him. "In India we give flowers to our teachers," he told her, and softly chanted some Sanskrit words of blessing over her[23].
Swamiji kept busy, beginning work on a book on modern Hinduism[24], learning French, and taking drawing lessons from Maud Stumm. Still he would occasionally mention to Joe that he was bored. "I'm getting tired of this lazy, idle life," he would say. "I think I'll go back to New York." "All right," she would reply at once. "There's a train that leaves tomorrow morning at four o'clock. Would you like to take that?" He never went[25].
Though Swami Vivekananda had physical suffering that fall, it did not affect the general aura of well-being and radiance which he projected to others, and out of this radiance came one of his most beautiful poems, "One Circle More." Marie Louise Burke states that this poem may have been written for Francis and Betty Leggett[26].

One circle more the spiral path of life ascends,

And Time’s restless shuttle -- running back and fro
Through maze of warp and woof --
Spins out a stronger piece.
Hand in hand they stand -- and try
To fathom depths whence springs eternal love,
Each in other’s eyes,
And find no power holds o’er that age
But brings the youth anew to them,
And time -- the good, the pure, the true.

[1] New Disc., 5:120.
[2] Culme-Seymour Coll., Decem- ber 19, 1913.
[3] Rems., pp. 264-66.
[4] New Disc., 5:122.
[5] Late and Soon, pp. 115-16.
[6] Ibid., p. 116.
[7] New Disc., 5:116.
[8] Ibid , p. 117.
[9] Rems., pp. 237-38.
[10] Letters SN I, ;,,69, p. 209.
[11] Gerua means ochre, the color of renunciation worn by sannyasins. Nivedita either used the term loosely to mean monastic dress or Joe MacLeod misquoted her. At this time, to our knowledge, Nivedita did not wear the ochre color. [See Pravrajika Atmaprana, Sister Nivedita of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda.]
[12] New Disc., 5:117.
[13] SNRV, p. 97.
[14] New Disc., 5:118-19.
[15] SNRV, pp. 97-98.
[16] Rems., p. 238.
[17] Whitmarsh ,, 1983.
[18] New Disc., 5:119. 89.
[19]CW8:474.
[20] Early Draft Late and Soon, let ter of April 25, 1899. Viscount Margesson states that early golf facilities at Ridgely must have consisted of only a few holes.
[21] Asim Chaudhuri, "The Blessed Game of Golf," Global Vedanta, Vol. I, No. 4.
[22] New Disc., 3:79-80.
[23] Late and Soon, p. 115. 94.
[24] New Disc., 5:116-17.
[25] Sister Devamata, "Memories of India and Indians," PB, June 1932, p. 304.
[26] New Disc., 5:130-31.

TAYLOR MACLEOD'S SACRIFICE

Though Joe had wanted Sara Bull to come to Ridgely to share in the joy of Vivekananda's presence, she did not arrive until October 7. Then suddenly, just two days later, a letter from a stranger changed everything for Joe. Her reminiscences continue:

It was while the Swami was at Ridgely Manor that a letter came from a lady unknown to us to say our only brother [Taylor MacLeod] was very ill in Los Angeles, and that she thought he would die and we ought to know it. So my sister said to me, "I think you must go." And I said, "Of course." Within two hours I was packed and the horses were at the door. We had four miles to drive to a railway station, and as I went out Swami put up his hand and said some Sanskrit blessing and then he called out, "Get up some classes and I will come."[1]

Perhaps while Joe was packing her bags, Swami Vivekananda went to his room and quickly rewrote a poem entitled "To My Own Soul," which he had sent to Sister Christine three weeks earlier, on September 13. Below is the version he gave to Joe as she was leaving that day.[2]

The first verse of this poem probably refers to the London work, standing on very shaky legs at this point. The first lines of the second verse reflect all the places Joe and he had been together, or perhaps to their two lives, begun so long ago yet still so full and rich. The last lines of the second verse certainly reflect his trust in and dependence on Joe. She was his Good Star. The third verse, with its indication of impending separation, refers to her sudden departure for California. And the last verse, with its "warning of evil thoughts," refers to what must have been her own prophetic words of warning to him about E. T. Sturdy and Henrietta Muller, defectors of his work.

To My Own Soul

Hold yet a while, Strong Heart,
Not part a lifelong yoke
Though blighted looks the present, future gloom.

[An] age it seems since you and I began our
March up hill or down. Sailing smooth o'er
Seas that are so rare --
Thou nearer unto me than oft-times I myself --
Proclaiming mental moves before they were!

Reflector true -- Thy pulse so timed to mine,
Thou perfect note of thoughts however fine --
Shall we now part, Recorder, say?

In thee is friendship, faith,
For thou didst warn when evil thoughts were brewing --
And though, alas, thy warning thrown away,
Went on the same as ever -- good and true.

So once again Joe was taken out of the scene in which Swami Vivekananda played. As Marie Louise Burke has written, "She could not have left Ridgely without a painful wrench at her heart; yet she drove off with a characteristic resilience and valiance, an acceptance of everything that came her way, which was indeed one of the traits for which Swamiji loved her."[3]

In early September, just after the swami's joyous arrival at Ridgely, Joe had written to Sara Bull, saying, "I am radiant and happy & don't want anything on earth but a few more people

to love[4].” Now she had to leave that happy place. It was another lesson in detachment. It was also another lesson in the advantages of not making plans that might fall through. Two weeks after her sudden departure for California, Swami Vivekananda praised Joe’s detachment, as noted in a letter from Betty to Joe, written October 27:

He spoke of “Joe” and said you were the only real soul who had “attained freedom among us all,” including himself. You could drop everything, everybody and go out without a thought of regret & do your work, that you had attained this through thousands of reincarnations, he had seen it in India & here. No luxury counted, no misery (as in India) mattered -- [you were] the same poised soul, etc.

We were all so glad we knew you!!!

When Miss Stumm was here [at Ridgely] she complained that he teased her about marriage, urged her to hasten and altogether worried her, she told me. He explained today that she had once said to him that she was going to marry someday and then be like you [Joe]. He fired up -- “You think you can be like Joe by marrying & then doing a few little kind things? Well, you’ll have to go back thousands of incarnations to begin! and then you won’t want your little man to begin with.”[5]

Joe’s first letter to Sister Nivedita from California told of her brother and the extraordinary experience she had had when she walked into his room. First, Joe’s own reminiscences tell about it:

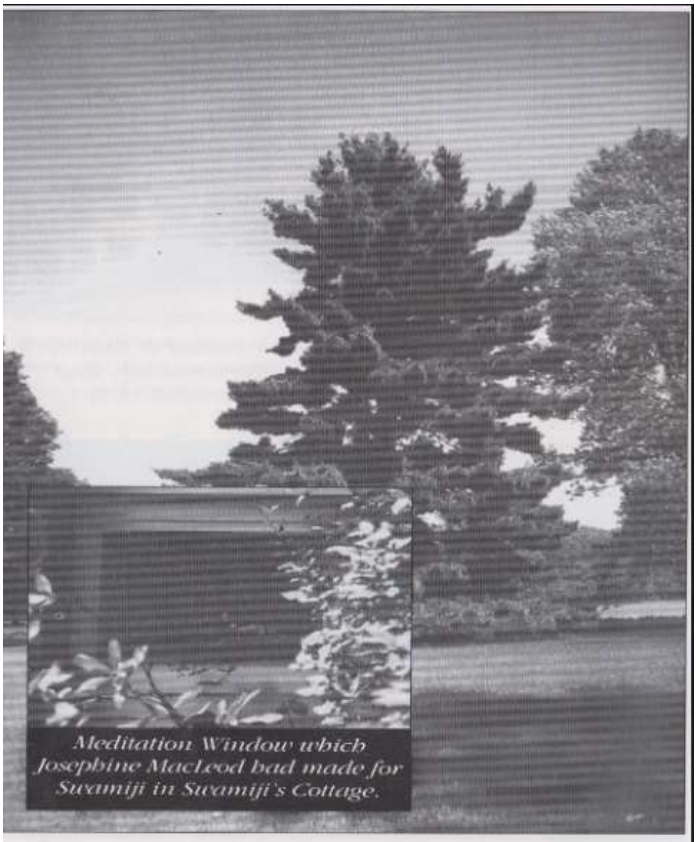
I went straight to Los Angeles and in a small white cottage covered with roses, on the outskirts of the city, lay my brother, very ill. But over his bed was a life-size picture of Vivekananda. I had not seen my brother for ten years, so after I had an hour’s talk with him and saw how very ill he was, I went out to see our hostess, Mrs. Blodgett, and said to her, “My brother is very ill.” She said, “Yes.” I said, “I think he will die.” She said, “Yes.” “May he die here?” I asked. She said, “Oh yes.”

The Little Cottage at Ridgely. Joe later named it "Swamiji's Cottage." Swamis Vivekananda, Turiyananda, and Abhedananda stayed in this cottage, fall 1899.

Ridgely Manor, September 1899. Standing, left to right: Swamis Vivekananda, Turiyananda, and Abhedananda. Sitting, left to right: Josephine MacLeod, a friend of Alberta's, Alberta Sturges (covering eyes), and Betty Leggett.

Ridgely Manor: The green couch often used by Swamiji.

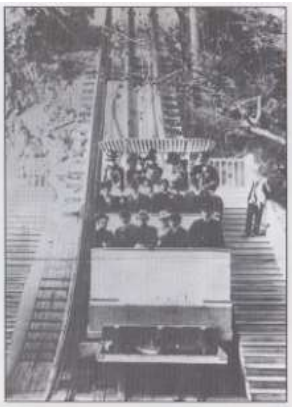
Meditation Bench Josephine MacLeod had made for Swamiji.



Meditation Window which Josephine MacLeod had made for Swamiji in Swamiji's Cottage.

The Prophet's Pine at Ridgely. A seedling from the pine under which Swamiji had sat and taught at Green Acre in Eliot, Maine, was brought by Joe MacLeod to Ridgely and transplanted.

Swami Vivekananda in front of the Mead family home, Pasadena.

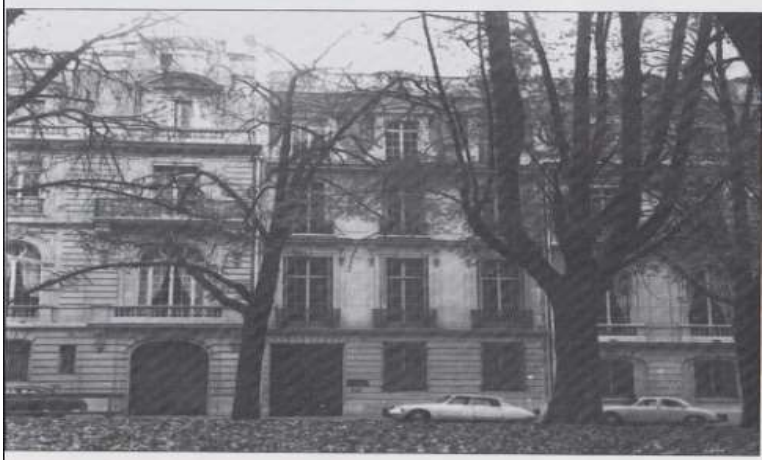


Taking the funicular up Echo Mountain, Pasadena, January 1900. Swamiji is in center.

AUTOGRAPH.	DATE.	VISITOR.
Vivekananda স্বামী বিবেকানন্দ	May 5th 1900	India

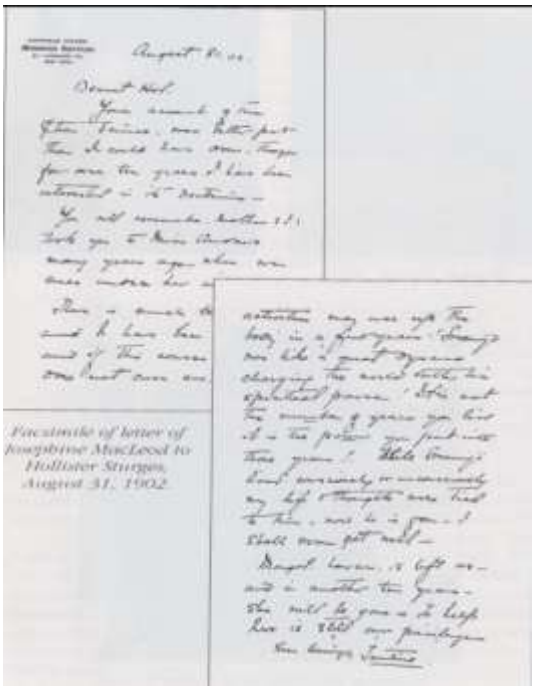
Facsimile of Guest Register at Leggetts' house, Paris, fall 1900.

Paris Exposition, fall 1900.



Leggetts' house in Paris, at 6 Place des Etats-Unis.

Swami Vivekananda, San Francisco, spring 1900.



Facsimile of letter of Josephine MacLeod to Hollister Sturges, August 31, 1902

Frances Leggett, 1904

Alberta Sturges

Josephine MacLeod and Emma Calve

Then I said, “Who is that man whose portrait is over my brother’s bed?” She drew herself up with all the dignity of her seventy years and said, “If ever there was a God on earth, that is the man.” I said, “What do you know about him?” She answered, “I was at the Parliament of Religions at Chicago in 1893, and when that young man got up and said, ‘Sisters and brothers of America,’ seven thousand [*actually four thousand*] people rose to their feet as a tribute to something they knew not what; and when it was over and I saw scores of women walking over the benches to get near him, I said to myself, ‘Well, my lad, if you can resist that onslaught, you are indeed a God.’”

Then I said to Mrs. Blodgett, “I know him.” “You know him?” she asked. I said, “Yes, I left him in the little village of Stone Ridge, of two hundred people, in the Catskill Mountains in New York.” She said, “You know him?” I said, “Why don’t you ask him here?” She said, “To my cottage?” “He will come,” I told her. In three weeks my brother was dead and in six weeks Swamiji was there and began his classes on the Pacific coast, in “California.”[6]

Later Mrs. Blodgett gave Joe this life-size poster of Swami Vivekananda, and Joe took it to Ridgely and had it mounted in a high-backed Gothic chair in her bedroom.[7]

When Sister Nivedita read Joe’s first letter from California, she responded: “I was overjoyed to hear from you of your hope for your brother and your joy in being on a pumpkin throne yourself, instead of merely loafin’ around Swami’s [throne]! Swami ... laughed at your rude remarks about the said throne -- and just loved it. He has always declared that the time would yet come for him to be in Kali’s land with you.”[8]

Again, having heard about Taylor’s condition, Nivedita wrote to Joe on November 4:

[After reading your letter, I said to Swami]: “Yum says that she wants nothing and nobody.” Swami looked up, and with a throb in his voice said, “No, she doesn’t. That’s right. It’s the last stage one comes to, and then it’s all giving. The beggar must look for alms and rebuffs. But for him who asks nothing, there are no rebuffs.”

There Dearest -- that is you.... I don’t want to make you out a saint ... but you do seem so far on, and I would give anything -- to learn through tears and struggles ... what comes to you in golden moments of chasing butterflies. Dearest -- remember that you are the good star -- and send strength to [Swamiji].[9]

Taylor MacLeod had run from something all his life. As described in Chapter One, he had first run away from home to join in fighting the Civil War; then to Argentina to escape from Libby Prison; then from the angered brothers of his dead wife; then out West, taking his brother, Donald MacLeod, with him to find fortune; and finally he had run after Donald’s killers. Banished from the family by his father, who blamed Taylor for Donald’s death, he had not been present at any family gatherings for at least ten years[10]. His death, however, was very peaceful with Joe at his side. On Friday, November 3, 1899, she wrote to Sara Bull:

My brother died peacefully last evening at 10 -- He simply ceased breathing -- ... Plucky and witty to the end.

This phase is finished and I feel that my brother was as necessary as any of us to the Prophet’s work. His illness brought me here -- surely and meaning, somehow, Swamiji is to come to California and have “Mother’s” blessing. I am loving it here and feel a new woman[11].

Within a week, everybody at Ridgely had left. Swami Turiyananda had gone to Montclair, New Jersey to begin teaching there; and on November 7, Sister Nivedita had gone to Chicago with Olea Vaughan and Alberta Sturges; Sara Bull had returned to Cambridge; and Swami Vivekananda and the Leggetts had returned to New York City[12].

The previous Sunday, November 5, while packing to leave, the swami had empowered Nivedita and Sara Bull to work for him. Nivedita later wrote of it to Joe, saying:

On Sunday afternoon Swami insisted on my coming and packing with him, and as I worked he took out a couple of silk turbans to give the girls [probably meaning Alberta Sturges and Frances Leggett]. Then two pieces of cotton cloth -- gerua [ochre] colour -- for Mrs. Bull. He called me to my room [in the Inn[13]], where Mrs. Bull sat writing, to give these -- and left the turbans on one side.

First he shut the door -- then he arranged the cloth as a skirt and chudder round her waist -- then he called her a Sannyasini and putting one hand on her head and one on mine he said, "I give you *all* that Ramakrishna [Paramahamsa] gave to me. What came to us from a Woman I give to you two women. Do what you can with it.... Women's hands will be the best anyway to hold what came from a Woman -- from Mother. Who and what She is, I do not know, I have never seen Her, but Ramakrishna [Paramahamsa] saw Her and touched Her -- like this (touching my sleeve). She may be a great disembodied spirit for all I know. Anyway I cast the load on you. I am going away to be at peace.... It is like a release. I have borne it all this time, and now I have given it up."[14]

In this letter to Joe, Nivedita referred to this event as "the great turning point" in her life. In *The Dedicated*, her biography of Nivedita, Lizelle Reymond commented that Vivekananda's action constituted nonformal initiation into sannyas, similar to what other monks were given during the early years at Belur Math. According to that author, Nivedita, upon her later return to India, decided to keep her title of brahmacharini, but wore the ochre cloth several times when speaking in public and wore it in her own home during the last years of her life[15]. Pravrajika Atma-prana, however, states in *Sister Nivedita of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda* that "as Nivedita was not initiated into sannyasa, she never put on the Gerua habit of a sannyasini," adding that she usually wore a white dress and sometimes a yellow colored gown.[16]

Upon his return to New York City, Swamiji first visited with Swami Abhedananda at the home of the Vedanta Society, 146 East Fifty-fifth Street. Then he walked over to the Leggetts' house on Thirty-fourth Street and stayed a day or two with them. In a letter that is incorrectly dated June 1895 in the *Complete Works* and which was actually penned November 8, 1899, he wrote:

Dear Joe,

> Experiences are gathering a bit thick round you. I am sure they will lift many a veil more.
> Mr. Leggett told me of your phonograph. I told him to get a few cylinders -- I talk in them through somebody's phonograph and send them to Joe -- to which he replied that he could buy one, because "I always do what Joe asks me to do." I am glad there is so much of hidden poetry in his nature.
> I am going today to live with the Guernseys as the doctor wants to watch me and cure me.... Doctor Guernsey, after examining other things, was feeling my pulse, when suddenly [Leon] Landsberg (whom they had forbidden in the house) got in and retreated immediately after seeing me. Dr. Guernsey burst out laughing and declared he would have paid that man for coming just then, for he was then sure of his diagnosis of my case. The pulse before was so regular, but just at the sight of Landsberg it almost stopped from emotion. It is sure only a case of nervousness. He also advises me strongly to go on with doctor Helmer's treatment. He thinks Helmer will do me a world of good, and that is what I need now. Is not he broad?
> I expect to see "the sacred cow" [Sara Bull] today in town. I will be in New York a few days more. Helmer wants me to take three treatments a week for four weeks, then two a week for four more, and I will be all right. In case I go to Boston, he recommends me to a very good ostad (expert) there whom he would advise on the matter.
> I said a few kind words to Landsberg and went upstairs to Mother Guernsey to save poor Landsberg from embarrassment.
>
> Ever yours in the Lord,
> Vivekananda[17]

The reader will recall Leon Landsberg from Chapters One and Two. He had become Swami Vivekananda's disciple, and had helped him establish his first living-teaching quarters in New York City. Jealous of other devotees, he had left Vivekananda without notice, reappearing later. In the summer of 1895 Swamiji had given him the vows of sannyas, naming him Swami Kripananda. When Landsberg later published an article making fun of yoga and Vivekananda, other devotees were outraged. Still, out of compassion, Vivekananda tried to "save poor Landsberg from embarrassment."

Joe was always to say that her mission in life was to recognize the new Buddha. Brahmachari Gurudas, at whose vows Joe had been present the previous spring, met Swami Vivekananda this November of 1899 in New York. Later, after he became Swami Atulananda, he wrote of his initial impression, saying: “People here [in India] seem disappointed that I have so little to say about [Swamiji], having seen him in New York. The fact of course is that I was not ready for him, could not see his greatness. He disappointed me as a monk, St. Frances of Assisi then being my ideal. Swamiji was not well and he certainly didn’t act like a stoic or a Christian Scientist. Thus by my own limitations I couldn’t see the real man. [Joe MacLeod] said once, ‘My greatness is that I could recognize Swamiji at once.’ There is truth in that.”[18]

Joe’s reminiscences include the following section which she placed near the beginning of her association with the swami, but which we have chosen to place in November 1899, since this is the first time definitely established for his staying with the Leggetts in their New York City house. She writes:

Perhaps it was during this period, when [Swamiji] was our guest in New York City, one day he came home very quiet and subdued. He did not speak for hours, and finally we said to him, “Swami! What did you do today?” And he said, “I have seen a thing today that only America can show. I was in the street car. Helen Gould sat on one side and a negro washer-woman, with her washing on her lap, on the other. No place but America can show that.”[19]

Helen Gould was the daughter of the famous tycoon, Jay Gould. In 1894 Swami Vivekananda had been a guest for a few days at her palatial country home.[20]

To be noted is the fact that Joe would not have been in New York City at the time this incident occurred. It seems that she so closely identified with family, whether it was the MacLeods, the Sturgeses, or the Leggetts, that it either made no difference to her that she had only been told about it, or that in hearing it told and retold over the years, she simply imbibed it as an experience of her own. Joe got her experiences, as Sister Nivedita said, through others.[21]

Swamiji remained in New York until November 21. He then went to Chicago, where he met for the first time Emma Calve[22], the famous singer, who was appearing in the role of Carmen, with the Metropolitan Opera Company[23]. She came to call on him on November 28, and he later wrote to Betty Leggett: “She is a great woman. I wish I saw more of her. It is a grand sight to see a giant pine struggling against a cyclone.”[24]

Finally on the evening of November 30, which was Thanksgiving, Swamiji boarded the *California Limited*, bound for Los Angeles and a new field of work.

[1] Rems., pp. 238-39.
[2] V and W, July-August 1948, p. 103; "Unpublished Letters of Swami Vivekananda," PB, November 1977, p. 472.
[3] New Disc., 5:128. 100.
[4] New Disc., 5:128. 100.
[5] Early Draft Late and Soon, p. 63.
[6] Rems., p. 239; also see New Disc., 1:74.
[7] New Disc., 5:199.
[8] Letters SN I,# 72, p. 219. 105.
[9] Letters SN I, ;,,73, p. 223.
[10] Late and Soon, p. 42.
[11] Friends Coll.[12] New Disc., 5:140. 109.
[13] New Disc. , p. 112, 141.[14] Letters SN I, #76, pp. 233-34.[15] Dedicated , pp. 212-13
[16] SNRV, p. 87.[17] CW 8:338-39; and see New Disc., 5:148.[18] Pravrajika Brahmaprana , With the Swamis, p. 277.
[19] Rems., p. 230.[20] New Disc., 2:21[21] Letters SN I, #70, p. 211.
[22] Swami Vidyatmananda, "Vivekananda in the Near East" II, PB, April 1977, p. 191.
[23] Letters SN I, #77, p. 237. 120.
[24] CW 7:516.

WORK AND PLAY (KALI'S LAND) (Part Two)

"Bonds are breaking -- love dying...."
--Swami Vivekananda, letter to Joe MacLeod, April 18 1900

Los Angeles, California was ready and waiting for Swami Vivekananda. There were some like Roxie Blodgett, who had actually attended the Parliament of Religions in 1893 and knew first-hand the thrill of hearing him speak. There were quite a few who had already read one or more of his yoga books, published in 1896 by the Vedanta Society of New York, and there were thousands who had read newspaper accounts of his astounding success at the Parliament. Joe once quoted him as having said about Californians, "All the ideas [they] have of me emanated from Chicago[1]." He felt too that the Raja Yoga book "did great services" in preparing people for him.[2]

There was also Joe with her natural friendliness, her sincere interest in other people, and her vivacious nature, which attracted others to her. With their attraction to Joe came an interest in what interested her most: Vivekananda and Vedanta.

It is worthwhile to note how she conducted herself all through her life in regard to Swamiji's work and the spreading of his message. Holding on to her love with all her mind, she moved through life, sharing what she had with others, and in a quiet, natural way, helpfully "opening doors" for Vivekananda and Vedanta. Writing to Sister Nivedita from Los Angeles, she stated her position in the matter of making him known to others: "Various gentlemen," [she wrote], "are interested, *so I do nothing*. In fact, I shall always try to be in the background -- though necessarily I must vouch for the Prophet, as I am the one who knows him."[3]

She also asked for Nivedita's help in writing pre-lecture publicity so that on Saturday, December 2, the day before the swami's arrival, a rather long article on him, including a photograph, appeared in the *Capital*, a weekly newspaper. The opening paragraph was certainly intriguing; and the photo caption announced his first lecture, which was to be held the following Friday evening, December 8.

Los Angeles is to be royally favored, in a very short time, in the visit of Swami Vivekananda to this city. He is in very truth, an Indian Prince -- Prince in intellect, in knowledge, and in that strange realm we vaguely call spiritual.[4]

Joe had met Bernhard Baumgardt, who happened to be secretary of the Southern California Academy of Sciences. He also chaired the Academy's Astronomy and Math section. It was he who arranged for Swamiji's first two lectures.

Now, having "summoned Swamiji to Kaliland[5]," having simply been Joe, making acquaintances left and right, and having received Nivedita's help with publicity, she could take a backseat and "wait to see what the Lord had up his sleeve!"

It was probably Joe who met Vivekananda when his train arrived in the early afternoon of Sunday, December 3, and took him to a Miss Spencer's house, where they would stay the first four days or so. Little is known about this Miss Spencer or why the first days of his visit were to be spent with her rather than Roxie Blodgett. However, she apparently became one of his devotees, and fourteen years later Joe was present in her home when a little meditation room was consecrated.[6]

While he was there, Swami Vivekananda spent a good deal of time sitting at the bedside of Miss Spencer's aged mother. When asked why he did this, he talked about death. He said to Miss Spencer that death, like birth, was a mystery; that when the body approaches dissolution, the sense activities are stilled as the soul gradually passes to the life beyond. *The Life* has commented: "This state, so sad and repulsive to a mind limited to external appearances, was to the swami's spiritual insight pregnant with interest and significance."[7]

During the early days of his time in southern California, the swami's mind was filled with thoughts of India and the financial problems of the Math. He had been in the West for four

months and his financial condition, on which he was depending to help out the Indian work, was no better than when he had arrived. Sister Nivedita had predicted a lift in his situation, beginning December 6, when planetary conditions would change, but on that date he wrote to her, saying: “Your sixth has arrived, but with it yet no change in my fortune.”[8]

[1]New Disc., 5:179.
[2] CW8:484.
[3] New Disc., 5:178-79.
[4] New Disc, p. 179.
[5] Letters SN I, #79, p. 242.
[6] Culme-Seymour Coll., March 16, 1914.
[7] Life 11, p. 492.
[8] Letters SV, p. 404.

TEA PARTY DAYS

By the time Vivekananda gave his first lecture on December 8, he had probably moved to Roxie Blodgett's cottage, for on the day following that lecture he used her address as a return on a letter. Joe had stayed here for almost two months prior to his arrival, no doubt accounting for the statement in her reminiscences that she and the swami were guests of Mrs. Blodgett "for months." Swami Vivekananda probably stayed there from December 8 to January 25, 1900. Joe's reminiscences tell about the Blodgett cottage, which was located at 921 West Twenty-first Street, Los Angeles:

We were Mrs. Blodgett's guests for months. This little cottage had three bedrooms, a kitchen, a dining room, and a sitting room. Every morning we would hear Swami chanting his Sanskrit from the bath, which was just off the kitchen. He would come out with tousled hair and get ready for breakfast. Mrs. Blodgett made delicious pancakes, and these we would eat at the kitchen table, Swami sitting with us; and such discourses he would have with Mrs. Blodgett, such repartee and wit, she talking of the villainy of men and he talking of the even greater wickedness of women! Mrs. Blodgett seldom went to hear him lecture, saying her duty was to give us delicious meals when we got back.[1]

On the evening of December 8, Swamiji spoke at the impressive Blanchard Hall to a spellbound audience of six hundred[2]. Right after the lecture, a woman named Alice Hansbrough went to her friend Bernhard Baumgardt, who had arranged the lecture, and asked him if the swami would give further talks. He suggested she speak to Josephine MacLeod. Joe suggested she see the swami and ask him herself. This she did, and a date was set for her and her two sisters to meet with him on December 13, the day after his next lecture[3]. Alice Hansbrough was one of those people who had already read Vivekananda's *Raja Yoga*.

Despite the enthusiasm of the spellbound crowd, Swamiji was gloomy the next several days. His great overriding concern at this time was the financial condition of the Math in India, which was being heavily taxed. On December 12 he wrote to Sara Bull, saying: "I did not do anything this time in America except bother my friends. Possibly Joe will help me out with the passage [to India], and I have some money with Mr. Leggett."[4]

If Vivekananda did ask Joe for money to return to India, she may have talked him out of returning to India just yet. It may have been that Joe knew he must hang on, must trust her judgment in the matter of his health, and must wait until his physical condition bettered. With improved health, she believed, would come a lift in every other aspect of his life.

Joe herself was always on the lookout for new natural healing techniques, and at some point she had, as Vivekananda would later say, "unearthed" a magnetic healer in Los Angeles named Mrs. Melton. Joe was benefitting from her treatments and insisted that the swami go to her too. Magnetic healing was a simple procedure, and books on the how-to of it were sold by mail. One needed only two sturdy hands, which when clapped together and rubbed quickly, produced heat which one then rubbed vigorously over the ailing part of the body. Mrs. Melton, however, had another ability which she used in diagnosing ailments: She intuited the cause of one's suffering by holding an object belonging to the patient. She could even diagnose long distance. "Mrs. Melton thinks [her gift is] holy," Joe wrote to Betty, "and lives as pure a life as a saint."[5]

That winter, Swamiji alternately felt some benefit and none at all from Mrs. Melton's painful "skin-paring" treatments. Later, in January, Betty Leggett, diagnosed long distance by the woman, would arrive in Los Angeles to be treated herself. Holding Betty's handkerchief, the woman would see that a needle or pin was in Betty's knee, and by the fourth treatment, a corroded needle would be removed from her leg[6]. On January 10 Betty would write to Frank: "Swami said this morning that he is convinced that all three of us have had incurable maladies (Joe has been very low) for the ordinary scientific physician and that God led us here and Taylor [MacLeod] was the necessary sacrifice to our salvation."[7]

Joe also believed that Taylor MacLeod's death had brought about the beginning of the beginning of Vivekananda's mission in California[8].

[1] Rems., pp. 239-40.
[2] New Disc., 5:183.
[3] New Disc., pp. 188-89.
[4] CW6:420.
[5] Friends Coll., December 13, 1899.
[6] Late and Soon, pp. 117-19.
[7] Early Draft Late and Soon,p. 75.
[8] Late and Soon, p. 120.

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NATURAL IMPRESSARIO

One might say that Swamiji's mission in California really took a forceful turn with his second talk, given Tuesday, December 12. On that evening he spoke at the regular monthly meeting of the Southern California Academy of Sciences, as arranged for by Bernhard Baumgardt. His topic was "The Cosmos," and it was attended by one thousand people. The next day, Joe wrote to Betty:

Today Swami acknowledges his cure for he has been 10 days with no distress and he eats anything ... and though he lectured last night before over 1000 people he drank a glass of hot milk and slept like a child all night. So I feel I am some use in this world. My mission is to discover healers!

... Swami spoke very quietly last night, in fact it seems to be his new way, but he was most scholarly & clear in the lecture ... and one member of the Academy of Sciences ... said he wanted to pay his personal tribute to the Swami Vivekananda, who had done so much for modern psychology, that he was a light among thinkers etc ... and then asked him a pertinent question ... that Swami answered so brilliantly that applause came from everyone. Mr. Baumgardt was *radiant*.[1]

On this same day, Alice Hansbrough and her sisters came to meet the swami, as previously arranged. Joe's reminiscences, written in the mid-1930s, continue:

One day [December 13] Mrs. Blodgett had three ladies come to call on the Swami. I left immediately, so he could be alone with them; and after half an hour he came to me and said, "These ladies are three sisters and they want me to come and make them a visit at Pasadena." I said, "Go." He said, "Shall I?" "Yes, go," I told him. They were Mrs. [Alice Mead] Hansbrough, Miss [Helen] Mead, Mrs. [Carrie Mead] Wyckoff. Mrs. Wyckoff's house is now the Vivekananda House in Hollywood [Vedanta Society of Southern California], and one of Swamiji's monks [Swami Prabhavananda] is there with her.[2]

The next day Joe wrote to Betty that Swamiji had "fairly danced with glee -- like the child that he is" after the Mead sisters' visit,[3] and within two days a new glorious mood had come upon him and the little cottage household. To Sister Nivedita, who was in Chicago, she wrote on December 15 that he seemed to feel "perfectly cured":

Your heavenly gossiping letter came last evening, and I'll read parts of it to Swamiji after lunch (which he is now cooking) while he lies in the hammock. Oh! The peace and blessings of this life and with each day comes the feeling that the reestablishment of Swami's health is more and more permanent. On Sat., a week from tomorrow we are going to see "My Friend from India", the farce on Swami. It will be screaming fun! and good relaxation after all his lectures.... He really seems to feel and act as if a new era were open to him.[4]

In this same letter, Joe described the wonderful reception given the swami at his Academy of Sciences lecture, adding: "...so you see, child, *my* way of being an impressario, is to like personally the two men, Mr. Baumgardt and Mr. Fritz, and they to take the initiative and responsibility...."[5]

The three Mead sisters wasted no time in setting up classes for the swami, and arranged for a series of three evening talks on "Applied Psychology" to be given December 19, 21, and 22[6]. They were to be held in a room at the Blanchard Building, but the first class, attended by two hundred people, was cramped, and the series was moved to the Home of Truth which had a large chapel[7]. This arrangement seemed to suit Swami Vivekananda, who could easily walk the six blocks from Roxie Blodgett's cottage to the Home of Truth, and a second series of six morning classes was held there from December 25 to 30. The subject of that series was "The Powers of the Mind."

So it was that the last days of the nineteenth century were spent in a simple, relaxed, routine fashion by Swami Vivekananda, Joe MacLeod, and Roxie Blodgett. Writing to Sister Nivedita on December 21, the Solar New Year, Joe reported: "'Happy New Year' -- I called out to Swamiji this morning and his face broke into a smile as he said 'Happy New Year to you and

to me.' I then made him greet the sun and gave him a gold coin! as emblematic of the new year's gifts to him[8]." And Swamiji himself wrote on December 23 to Nivedita: "I am perfectly well -- and am going to remain so, I am sure. The wheel is turning up, Mother is working it up. She cannot let me go before Her work is done -- and that is the secret[9]."
That same day he and Joe attended a reception held for him by Caroline Severance at her palatial home "El Nido[10]"; and that evening he, Joe, Alice Hansbrough and some others were guests of Bernhard Baumgardt at the theatre, where they saw the farce, "My Friend from India." Marie Louise Burke points out that this was not actually a farce but rather a satire on the way New York Society had lionized Swami Vivekananda. Alice Hansbrough later said: "Swamiji enjoyed it hugely. Professor Baumgardt said he had never seen anyone laugh so hard or so much[11]." "Screaming fun!" as Joe had predicted.

[1] Friends Coll. 18 [2] Rems. , p. 240[3] New Disc., 5:211.[4] Friends Coll...[5] Friends Coll.[6] New Disc., 5:211-12.[7] New Disc., 5:211-12[8] Friends Coll. 25.[9] CW6:422.[10] New Disc., 5:214-15.
[11] New Disc., pp. 206-07

A REAL CHRISTMAS

The following day, Christmas Eve, Joe wrote to Sara, "New Year's and New Century's greetings from all angels.... In another month, new fields, a new life will open to me. Swamiji will probably stay on in California -- though you know we only live from day to day[1]." And that evening he and Joe had dinner at the Mead sisters' home, thus beginning the next and last phase of his work in southern California. Alice Hansbrough later recalled:

It was about an hour's ride on the electric train for them to reach our house [in Pasadena]. The train stopped just at the corner, and then they had only a few steps to our door. I can see the picture of them now, standing at the front door, so I must have met them when they arrived. After speaking to each of us as he came in, Swamiji turned and walked into the living room. The tall windows looked out through the trees in our garden. He walked to one of them and stood for some minutes looking out, the white curtains framing him against the sunlight. Then he turned and spoke, answering again the question I had asked him at Mrs. Blodgett's. "Yes," he said, "I will come to visit you!" Then he wanted to come right away, and he soon did.[2]

(Actually it was about a month before he moved to the Mead house, according to return addresses and dates on his letters.)

The next day was Christmas and Swami Vivekananda lectured on "Christ's Message to the World." In her reminiscences, Joe describes an experience she had while he was speaking on Jesus, which may have referred to this lecture or to one he gave two weeks later on "Christ the Messenger." She writes:

Swami lectured a great number of times at the Home of Truth and in various halls, but perhaps the most outstanding lecture I ever heard was his talk on "Jesus of Nazareth", when he seemed to radiate a white light from head to foot, so lost was he in the wonder and the power of Christ. I was so impressed with this obvious halo that I did not speak to him on the way back [home] for fear of interrupting, as I thought, the great thoughts that were still in his mind. Suddenly he said to me, "I know how it is done." I said, "How what is done?" "How they make mulligatawny soup. They put a bay leaf in it," he told me.

That utter lack of self-consciousness, of self-importance, was perhaps one of his outstanding characteristics. He seemed to see the strength and the glory and the power of the other man who felt that courage enter into him, until everyone who came near him went away refreshed and invigorated and sustained. So when people have said to me, "What is your test of spirituality?" I have always said, "It is the courage that is given by the presence of a holy man." Swamiji used to say, "The saviours should take on the sins and tribulations of their disciples and let the disciples go on their way rejoicing and free. There is the difference! The saviours should carry the burdens."[3]

In *New Discoveries* Marie Louise Burke has added the information that Joe would have been walking behind Swami Vivekananda, as was her custom. She writes: "Jovial and easy though he was, one instinctively, naturally, treated him with deep respect. One felt always the essential majesty and profundity of his being."[4]

Marie Louise Burke has also written of an incident, told by Joe MacLeod, which may have occurred after this lecture on Christ. She writes:

At the close [of the lecture] a young man rushed forward and prostrated at Swamiji's feet, touching him. As though stung, Swamiji jumped back. "Don't *ever* do that!" he admonished him with vehemence; "Don't *ever* do that again!" Miss MacLeod gave no explanation. But as is well known, in India at least, there is a state of spiritual exaltation, familiar to Avataras and saints, in which the touch of a hand even slightly soiled by the world can be painful in the extreme. Another explanation might be that the touch could communicate to the boy far more spiritual power than he would be able safely to contain.[5]

In later years, after Swamiji's death, Roxie Blodgett wrote the following to Joe MacLeod, reminiscing about their "tea party days" with him:

... You were constantly rendering him some apparently trifling service in the everyday homely happenings of our daily life, he in some small way requiring to be set right.... Thus I know, aside from the loss of a delightful and rare companion, the fact alone of your generous service brought him very near to you.

One day busy with my work, Swamiji absorbed with his curries and chapattis, I spoke to him of you, when he said: "Ah, yes! Jo is the sweetest spirit of us all" --

He would come home from a lecture where he was compelled to break away from his audience, so eagerly would they gather around him - come rushing into the kitchen like a boy released from school, with, "Now we will cook!" The prophet and sage would disappear, to reveal the child side or simplicity of character. Presently "Jo" would appear and discover the culprit among pots and pans in his fine dress, who was by thrifty, watchful Jo admonished to change to his home garments.[6]

It may have been around this time that Joe gave some money to the swami to help ease the financial plight of the Math. In later years she told Swami Ashokananda that one day when they were in Los Angeles, he received a letter from India and seemed very depressed by it. When she asked what was wrong, he told her that the Math had no money and that his brother disciples did not have enough to eat. At once, she said, she told Swamiji that she had saved eight hundred dollars and would give it to him. And she did.[7]

By December 27 he was in high spirits and even ran to catch the electric streetcar[8]. Three letters written by him on that day also attest to his general sense of physical improvement and a lessening of that frantic despair over financial woes of the Math. In one written to Sara Bull he confided: "I am very much more peaceful and find that the only way to keep my peace is to teach others. Work is my only safety valve.... Again, I can only work when thrown completely on my own feet. I am at my best when I am alone. Mother seems to arrange so. Joe believes great things are brewing -- in Mother's cup; hope it is so.... Joe and Margot [Sister Nivedita] have developed into actual prophets, it seems. I can only say, every blow I had in this life, every pang, will only become joyful sacrifice if Mother becomes propitious to India once more."[9]

[1] Letters SN I, append. #12, p. 407.
[2] New Disc., 5:242-43.
[3] Rems., p. 240.
[4] New Disc., 5:222.
[5] New Disc.5:222.
[6] Rems., pp. 358-59.
[5] New Disc., 5:237.
[7] New Disc., pp. 208-09.
[8] cw 8:485-86.

A NEW CENTURY: A NEW AGE

In 1899, Sunday, December 31 was more than just New Year's Eve. It was also the eve of the Turning of the Century. Exactly how Swami Vivekananda observed it is not known to us, but it is certain that Joe and Roxie Blodgett were blessed to be in his presence at that great natural junction of Then and Now. Sister Nivedita wrote to Joe: "The New Year begins the New Age. It will be full of happiness and blessedness for him and you."[1]

The first week of January 1900, Swamiji's morning classes were moved from the Home of Truth to Payne's Hall because, according to Alice Hansbrough, he did not feel free to speak critically of metaphysical ideas from the platform at the Home[2]. He gave two evening lectures at Blanchard Hall; and then on Sunday, January 7, he lectured at Payne's Hall on "Christ's Message to the World." That day the house was not only packed to capacity, but over a hundred people had to be turned away.[3]

Joe's natural way of doing things to serve the swami was to keep in the background. When she did *not* do that, it sometimes caused problems. On January 7, when Vivekananda lectured on Christ, an illustrative incident occurred. Marie Louise Burke has recorded the following recollection of what happened in Alice Hansbrough's words:

The Mr. Blanchard for whom Blanchard Hall was named was present at this lecture, and the size of the audience [at Payne's Hall] was not lost on him. When the lecture was over, he came up to me on the platform, where Swamiji was talking to some people. "I would like to make some money out of this man -- for him as well as for myself," he said. "Could I announce to the audience now that he will speak next Sunday at Blanchard Hall?" I told him I could not give him such permission. He then went to Miss MacLeod, who did give him permission. So while Swamiji was still there, Mr. Blanchard announced from the platform that Swami Vivekananda would speak the following Sunday at Blanchard Hall and that the admission would be ten cents.

When Swamiji heard this announcement, he turned and asked who gave the man permission to make it. Somehow Miss MacLeod crawled out of it, and Swamiji turned on me. He was thoroughly annoyed and looked quite angry. He said the man should not have been allowed to make such an announcement. He pointed out that he had had no end of trouble trying to get rid of people who wanted to make money out of him. And he could not be persuaded to give the lecture at Blanchard Hall.[4]

In the meantime Betty Leggett had obeyed Joe's summons to Kaliland. She arrived there on January 5, and Joe wrote to Frank Leggett:

Within an hour after Betty's arrival, she was under Mrs. Melton's treatment, wincing as we all do, as these streams of fire seem to burn the nerves, as [Mrs. Melton] ran her fingers down [Betty's] arms and legs. The next morning when Mrs. Melton was diagnosing Betty, she was obliged to stop, the pain was so great, that Mrs. Melton suffered herself, no doubt through sympathy[5].

Betty also moved into Roxie Blodgett's cottage[6]. From there on January 12, she wrote to Frank about Swami Vivekananda: "We have had a morning class here, about 20 women, and have been permeated with great associations through one of Swami's best talks. He reaches his apogee always in small companies, as you once said, and although his addresses here [in Los Angeles] have been fine, he seems inspired to wander into any depth or altitude when away from the restrictions of a stated subject."[7]

On January 13, Swamiji, the Baumgardts, Joe, and Betty went to Mount Lowe[8]. Mount Lowe is a high peak in the San Gabriel mountain range that rises just northeast of Pasadena. The little train station from which the party would have departed still stands on Lake Avenue. The train would have carried them straight north to the base of Mount Lowe. Then they would have gotten into another vehicle for their ascent up the mountain. Marie Louise Burke has written about this visit and about the famous photograph which was no doubt taken there. She states:

[In the photograph] ... one sees Swamiji standing in the very center of a funicular-load of excursionists and looking, at the moment, none too happy. The people around him are unidentified, but just behind his right shoulder appears a man whose photograph resembles one of Mr. Baumgardt. The funicular is about to ascend the first steep slope of the mountain by way of the Great Cable Incline, a track that climbed straight up for a dizzy half mile to Echo Summit -- a small plateau from which one could halloo once and be answered by the friendly mountains thirteen times.[9]

On Echo Summit was a small and very elaborate little hotel called Echo Mountain House. Here the party stayed overnight, viewing the stars through the telescope at the nearby Lowe Observatory. Before leaving Pasadena that day (January 13), Betty had reported to Frank in a letter:

We go to-day to Mount Lowe with an astronomer, Mr. Baumgardt, to look at these wonderful heavens through a telescope and pass the night, not in the heavens, although I learn that it is as near a paradise as this earth provides. A beautiful mountain converted into a park, topped by an observatory, given to the world by a man who impoverished himself in the desire to be a benefactor. The world enjoys his sacrifice and he has gone away forgotten.[10]

The next morning Swamiji gave a talk at the hotel, as reported in the *Pasadena Star*. That afternoon they all boarded a little trolley car and went up the mountain to the Alpine Tavern, a rustic hotel, at the five-thousand-foot altitude of Mount Lowe's summit, returning to Echo House late that afternoon.[11]

The next week, beginning on Monday, was very hectic, as it included talks given in the mornings at the elegant Green Hotel in Pasadena, two evening lectures, and a morning reception at the Shakespeare Club of Pasadena. On January 11, Donald MacLeod, a cousin of Betty and Joe, had arrived in Los Angeles for a brief visit. That day Betty wrote to Frank: "We learnt that our cousin Donald MacLeod is coming to Los Angeles today, so we postponed our circle trip of eight hours to visit Riverside, Redlands, etc. until next week..... [Donald MacLeod] looks much like Father, is very gentlemanly, cultivated, and MacLeodish."[12]

So it was that on January 16, Swamiji, Joe, and Betty took a nine-hour train excursion on the famous Kite-Shaped Track to Redlands, California. They had lunch at the grand and famous Casa Loma Hotel, where Betty recorded their names in the register, and they also visited Canyon Crest Park.[14]

In connection with Swamiji's morning talks at the Green Hotel, Alice Hansbrough once recalled that the only time she ever heard Swami Vivekananda speak sharply to Joe MacLeod was when he spoke there. Stating that Joe had a tendency to be rather "high-toned," she recalled:

It was principally with people who affected the same airs that [Joe MacLeod] put them on. And she never made the mistake of putting on airs with Swamiji. He often told her "where to get off" when she had a tendency to be too high-toned. But the only time I ever heard him speak sharply to her was before a class in the ballroom of the Green Hotel. She was expressing an opinion as to what should be done about some phases of his work, and he suddenly turned on her. "Keep quiet about what should be done!" he said. "We will do whatever has to be done." But he also said of her, "Joe has a very sweet nature."[14]

By January 17, just after the kite-shaped track excursion, Swamiji wrote to Sara Bull, indicating that his mission from the platform was at that point finished. It is a powerful letter filled with renunciation in which he stated:

I have been able to remit Rs. 2,000 to Saradananda, with the help of Miss MacLeod and Mrs. Leggett. Of course they contributed the best part. The rest was got by lectures. I do not expect anything much here or anywhere by lecturing. I can scarcely make expenses. No, not even that; whenever it comes to paying, the people are nowhere.

... Will you send me back to India? I have become practical at least compared to the visionary dreams of Joe and Margot. Let them work their dreams out for me -- they are not more than dreams. I want to make out a trust-deed of the Math ... then I am quits.... Mother shows this light vividly now. Of course you were the one to whom She showed it first. I would not believe

it then.... I am surer of your guidance than of my own. Joe and Margot are great souls, but to you Mother is now sending the light for my guidance.[15]

Some of the money Betty Leggett had given Swamiji, referred to in this letter, had been collected by her in an effort to help his Indian work. Writing to Frank Leggett on January 26, Betty explained her idea of asking for annual subscriptions from various devotees interested in his work. She wrote:

A list of names has been organised here, open to such of his admirers who will pledge themselves each, to give him a hundred dollars a year for ten years for his work in India. He is to be left free to use it as he chooses.... With all the tranquility of soul Swami has brought into the lives of his Western friends, it seems to me it must be worth something tangible to each and this expression can be manifested by a small annual subscription to his work among the people of India.[16]

In his letter of January 17 to Sara Bull Swamiji had also written: "I am but a child; what work have I to do? My powers I passed over to you. I see it. I cannot more *tell* from the platform. Don't tell it to anyone -- not even to Joe. I am glad. I want rest; not that I am tired, but the next phase will be the *miraculous touch and not the tongue* -- like Ramakrishna's. The word has gone to you and the voice to Margot. No more it is in me. I am resigned."[17]

[1] Letters SN I, #97, p. 277.[2] New Disc., 5:225.[3] New Disc., pp. 231-32.[4] New Disc., p. 232.[5] Early Draft Late and Soon ,p. 73.[6] Early Draft Late and Soon., letter of Betty Leggett to Francis Leggett, January 13, 1900, p. 72.[7] Early Draft Late and Soon., p. 77.[8] Early Draft Late and Soon., letter of Betty Leggett to Francis Leggett, January 13, 1900, p. 78.[9] New Disc., 5:244.[10] Early Draft Late and Soon, p. 78.[11] New Disc., 5:245.[12] Early Draft Late and Soon,p. 75.[13] New Disc., 5:247-48.[14] New Disc., p. 263.[15] CW8:489-91.[16] Early Draft Late and Soon, p. 82.[17] CW8:490-91.

A HALE STORM

While Swami Vivekananda was trying to withdraw from platform *work*, Sister Nivedita was undergoing platform *training* in Chicago. She was finding that it was not the lecturing itself that was so difficult, but rather dealing with people who loved Swami Vivekananda. One problem-person in particular was Mary Hale.

Mary Hale and Nivedita, being of entirely different temperaments, had been at mental odds with each other before they even met. Mary and her family had been largely responsible for the swami's being so well situated in 1893 when he first came to Chicago. They had housed him, fed him, introduced him here and there, laughed with him, and been his great American church family. To the swami, they were Father Pope, Mother Church, and the babies - Mary, her sister Harriet, and their cousins, Isabel and Harriet McKindley. Some of the swami's most self-revealing letters were written to Mary Hale. But Mary was not a worker in the sense that Sister Nivedita was a worker. "She is one of the women who sit at home and ponder," Nivedita once wrote of Mary.[1]

It was inevitable that Nivedita, who was destined to fire up women's education in India and chronicle Swami Vivekananda's life and message, would irritate a person of Mary Hale's temperament. Nivedita's "hero worship" of Swamiji bothered Mary, who also did not care for her monastic dress.[2] In Chicago, at Christmastime 1899, things came to a head and Sister Nivedita realized with a shock that not only were the Hales *not* her well-wishers but they also did not particularly care for Joe MacLeod. Writing to Mary Hale on Christmas Day, Nivedita told her:

If I am set on seeing Swami in ways that seem to you silly --let him tell me so -- ... There is only one place that I can claim in Swami's eyes, & that is a working place & in what pertains to my work he has trained me with infinite care [and] I have got -- in that one direction -- a clearer view than others.

... As to Miss MacLeod -- I am sure you will allow me to forget that her name was mentioned -- I must either wipe out the criticism of her -- or forego the pleasure of ever enjoying you myself. She has done more for me than I could ever tell. Mere gratitude would dictate this attitude, if love did not. The things that offended you however are all capable of very different interpretations from that you give them -- and yours is not the true one --[3]

One problem was that Sister Nivedita considered herself Swamiji's instrument in the message she was giving -- the work she was doing. Therefore, she had expected that his devotees would support that work, not because she belonged to the swami but *because the work belonged to him*. Eager to form some sort of committee to help carry on this work, she had approached Mary Hale about acting as secretary. It was almost as if Nivedita were setting herself up for rejection, and of course rejection had come full force. Pravrajika Atmaprana has written about it:

Never had Nivedita dreamt that one of the Swami's greatest friends would [not cooperate] with her. Therefore, when Mary Hale not only refused ... but went forth to tell her that her family and she herself would not like to identify themselves with Nivedita's work, she was deeply hurt.

It struck Nivedita for the first time that the Swami's work and hers were considered different. She had considered herself his instrument.... Till now she had been well acquainted with only two American friends of the Swami -- Mrs. Bull and Miss MacLeod -- and such a bond of love and understanding had tied them together that they had identified themselves with each other's interests.[4]

On January 9 Sara Bull wrote to Sister Nivedita, underlining what Mary Hale had been saying all along -- but in a more gentle and genteel manner, and also giving her own perception of Joe's great gift in life. She wrote:

Your Hindu name & gown are both helpful & good for your work at times -- but your English name and qualities & your Christian education are what make you, inclusive of these, of value

here to us -- and I do expect, dear child, that as you, with Joe's loving help, adapted your nature to Swamiji & the Indian life, so your great love will in time teach you to equally adapt yourself to the right things to do towards people & conditions in general. This is Joe's great gift -- Swamiji has had so much help from her natural tact & love, winning him old friends when hurt, & making new -- I know you will gain it from her, & then your work will move on, & the doors open & not close.[5]

That same day, January 9, Sister Nivedita had a visit from Mary Hale and later penned to Joe an anguished cry for consolation, saying:

It seems to me that I have just received the last and worst blow of all. One of Swami's earliest friends [Mary Hale] has been in to say that she and her family would rather not be identified with my work. They wanted to help but find themselves out of sympathy.

Yes! I know it is their right to disagree, they must be free! But Oh! Do give me a little comfort, for I feel utterly discouraged. If this is the attitude of Swami's people, how can I ever expect to do anything anywhere?[6]

On January 14, in what must have been a return-mail response to her "dearest Child," Joe wrote the following letter. Reading it gives some idea of what Swami Vivekananda meant when he said that Joe "could wield a kingdom." Like the loving mother she was, and from a distance of two thousand miles, Joe put a compassionate arm around the younger woman's shoulders. Then, like the true friend she was, she set her straight. She wrote:

I have your long letter telling me that Mary Hale does not wish to act as your Secretary and of the general disapproval. If I had you here half an hour you would start again with greater courage and hope than you ever had before. I quite see the blow you have had. It was dreadful -- but now that it is over it will influence your whole life and make you a success -- independent of Swami. You will have Kali's blessings direct and Swami's perfect love and trust....

You know and Swami knows that I have always felt you had a mission -- your own message for this work -- and you can do better work where he is not known. No one who has ever known and loved him can ever take anybody else's version of him -- not even yours.

As Saradananda used to say, they would not listen to Swami in the Ramakrishna days. So you must strike out alone with new people -- make your own audiences -- your own disciples in your own way, and two years of training in America is not too much. The woman problem is left to you and Swami should be left out -- obliterated in your outward work. He is in fact the source of your life as he is of most of ours. To have known him as we know him is the greatest blessing this life could give and our knowledge of this is the strong bond between you, S.S. ["Saint Sara" Bull], and me -- but there it ends.

The Hales adore Swami in their own way and not ours. They give him all they can but the perception that our Indian life gave us of him, they are incapable of understanding and none of his friends will ever understand that. And so you must go into a fresh new element where he may never be known....

The blow to your affection is none the less. What I am showing you is the lesson that I have vaguely felt for some time and this but confirms it....

When you had your message for the world you made staunch true friends -- your message of Kali is *your* own and Swami had nothing to do with it. I am so glad you wrote. You see the people who are indifferent to Swami like Mrs. H. -- you can touch -- curious, isn't it?[7]

In reply Sister Nivedita wrote back to Joe: "I am going to fix my eyes on your message 'Live your own life. Speak your own message,' and I know when I make the inevitable mistakes I can come to you, without even a reproach. Oh, Yum dearest, I can't think why you were born -- except as Mother's own Xmas present to the rest of us."[8]

Later Joe had a few words for Mary Hale, writing to her on February 25, 1900:

My attitude towards Margot I could not explain -- did I not have the same in a greater degree towards Swamiji -- from the hour I first saw him he has been to my mind beyond criticism. Perhaps it is that that is my mental attitude toward most humans. I dare not criticize what I cannot myself do -- and so in regard to Margot -- her method -- her manner of life -- her insight into things is so extraordinary from my standpoint, that I deem it one of the privileges of my

life to have known her and to have had her confidence. She is way beyond my depth and all I have ever done is to listen to her -- with a respect that verges on veneration. Both she and Swami must feel this unspoken attitude -- and thence the freedom they both feel toward me. Not being a worker, the least I can do is to give them my entire sympathy and confidence. Otherwise I should feel that I have no right to their friendship at all. Thus it is fortunate for me that what I have to offer has its value. Swami recognized my limitations when he said to me in California, "You have never been a worker therefore your judgment is of little value in regard to workers."[9]

[1] Letters SN I, #89, p. 262. 55. Ibid.,# 78, p. 239.
[2] Ibid. , ;,,99, pp. 278-79.
[3] SNRV, p. 104.
[4] Friends Coll.
[5] Letters SN I, #102, p. 296. 60. SNRi pp. 104-05.
[6] Letters SN I, #107, p. 306.
[7] Friends Coll.

VIVEKANANDA HOUSE

Swami Vivekananda did not move to the Mead sisters' home until after January 24; and when he did arrive, it was unannounced. One morning he simply pulled up in a carriage in front of 309 Monterrey Road in Pasadena, climbed out and dropped his bags at their door, announcing: "I have come to stay with you. That's too much of a lady[1]!" Who the "lady" was is not known. Swamiji had, however, stayed with a family named Stimson, an Emeline Bowler, and a Mrs. J. C. Newton at some point. Joe also stayed with the Meads for a short time, Betty remaining either with Roxie Blodgett or elsewhere, but coming to Pasadena to attend his talks[2].

The Mead house is today owned by the Vedanta Society of Southern California and has been given official status as an historical site by the City of South Pasadena. Considering the number of people who stayed in it, it is not large. Jesse Mead, his three daughters, two grandchildren, and a housekeeper all lived there. On the first floor, one enters a small entry hall. To the left there is a living room, which looks out onto the front and side lawns. The dining room runs the width of the house and is entered either from the entry hall or the living room. It is a large comfortable room with a fireplace. A kitchen and backporch are at the rear, and in Swami Vivekananda's day, there was a lovely secluded garden in the backyard, where he liked to walk. A screened-off area in the dining room served as Mr. Mead's bedroom, and Alice Hansbrough's little daughter and the housekeeper slept in the attic. On the second floor are three bedrooms and a bath. During Swami Vivekananda's visit, he was given the corner bedroom, which looked out over an orange grove. All the women slept hospital-style in the largest bedroom, and Ralph, Carrie Mead Wycoff's son, slept in the third bedroom[3]. Today, Swami Vivekananda's room is kept as a Shrine.

During Swamiji's stay with the Mead family, he gave a series of morning classes followed by a series of evening lectures at the Shakespeare Club. He also gave one lecture at the Universalist Church. His last recorded lecture date was Saturday, February 3, though two more talks were given, titles and dates unknown[4].

By that time, however, Joe had gone. On Friday evening, February 2, she had left for San Francisco, where she would await Betty's arrival a few days later[5]. The two sisters later stopped in Chicago, where they missed seeing Sister Nivedita, who was in Minneapolis, but where they did meet with Emma Calve. By February 15 the sisters were back in New York.

As for Swami Vivekananda, on February 15 he was preparing to go to San Francisco. In the months he spent in southern California Vivekananda had laid the foundation for the Vedanta work that was to flourish there in later years, and which today remains as a monument to his magnitude. It was the dedication and love of the people with whom he was close at this time -- Josephine MacLeod, Betty Leggett, Roxie Blodgett, Alice Hansbrough, Helen Mead, Carrie Mead Wycoff, and others that made possible a number of the stepping stones that were necessary to the establishment of some of that later work. The stories of these women form an important part of the history of the Ramakrishna Vedanta Movement in America.

It has already been mentioned that in 1914 a little meditation room was consecrated in Miss Spencer's home. Joe, who was present, wrote about it to her niece Alberta, saying: "It may mean something, or nothing. The real thing is that we keep His message ever before us that all men are divine[6]." The lives of the women who were transformed through their association with Swami Vivekananda became sources of inspiration to those who came into contact with them. Quietly living Vedanta, they themselves carried some of its light to others. When Roxie Blodgett passed away in late 1915 Joe wrote of her: "I did so honour and love and respect her! Womanhood had a fine example in her."[7]

[1] Brahmacharini Usha [Pravra jika Anandapranal, "Swamiji in Southern California," V and W, #158, Nov-Dec 1962, p. 52.[2] New Disc., 5:244. [3] New Disc., pp. 250-51.[4] New Disc., Table of Lectures.
[5] Early Draft Late and Soon,p. 93.[6] Culme-Seymour Coll., March 16, 1914.
[7] Friends Coll., to Carrie Mead Wycoff, January 30, 1916.

WORK WITHOUT JOE

Swami Vivekananda arrived in San Francisco on Thursday, February 22 on the *Southern Pacific*[1]. Alice Hansbrough had gone ahead of him by a week to make arrangements for his lodging, advance publicity, and a lecture or two. But she lacked experience in managing this sort of thing, and the attendance at his first lecture on February 23 was poor. Later she indicated that this was because she had relied on the advice of Josephine MacLeod who thought the first lecture should not be free. Later Alice Hansbrough said: "I did not have temerity and outspokenness [then], or I would have ridiculed Miss MacLeod into agreeing that it should be a free first lecture.... [If I were to do it over again] I would get the California Academy of Sciences to sponsor the first lecture and have it free. If we had done this, it would have given Swamiji at the start a group of intellectual people...."[2]

Joe was not a part of Vivekananda's San Francisco days. Only by letter do we have any conversation between Swamiji and her for this period. Though he did get off to a slow start there, his second lecture drew a capacity crowd with five hundred being turned away, and he was soon giving private instruction to a number of sincere students. Later he mentioned that "the pressure of work and irregularity of food and sleep" had been tremendous in San Francisco, adding, "yet I love it well after all. It is my nature to be at my best when left alone."[3]

On March 2 the swami wrote to Joe from the Home of Truth where he was staying. Excerpts from this long letter follow:

Dear Joe,

> Mary [Hale] writes that you wrote her of my coming any day to the east. I don't know. Here I have a large following ready-made by my books. Will get some money, not much.... Did you see any possibility of my books being sold for good to any publisher?
>
> The French invitation [to the Congress of the History of Religions] is all right. But it seems impossible to write any decent paper on the subject we chose. Because if I have to lecture & make money, very little time will be left for anything else. Again I cannot find any books (Sanskrit) here. So let me try to make a little money if I can and go to France all the same but send them no paper. No scholarly work can be done in this haphazard & hurried fashion. It means time and study.
>
> ... My health is going in the same way. The gas is there more or less and this city is all climbing up. That tires me much.
>
> With all love. Yours affly, Vivekananda[4]
>
> Five days later on March 7 he wrote Joe again. His letter reads in part:
>
> ... I am so so in health. No money. Hard work. No result. Worse than Los Angeles.
>
> They come in crowds when the lecture is free -- when there is payment, they don't. That's all. I have a relapse -- for some days -- and am feeling very bad. I think lecturing every night is the cause. I hope to do something in Oakland at least to work out my passage to New York, where I mean to work for my passage to India. I may go to London if I make money here to pay a few months' lodging there.
>
> Good-bye. May see you in Paris, may not. Lord bless you, you have done for me more than I ever deserve.
>
> With infinite love and gratitude.
> Yours, Vivekananda[5]

Joe, in New York now, may have felt that had she been in San Francisco, things might have been going better for Swamiji. This would not have been personal egotism or conceit on her part; it would have been to Joe's mind simply the way things were. She had a keen sense of her mission; one of her functions was to facilitate -- to bring together successful elements. As Marie

Louise Burke has pointed out, “There was no Miss MacLeod in San Francisco to interest a number of influential men in [Swamiji’s] work; nor at the beginning of his visit did he himself know anyone of note in the city.”[6]

By the end of March he was living at 1719 Turk Street. Joe was very interested in the publication of his books. She later became one of the main devotees involved in getting them translated into other languages, published, and promoted. Either on her own, or at his request, she shipped him copies of books that had already been published so they could be sold in California, and apparently suggested getting his lectures on karma yoga published in book form. On March 30 he wrote to her from the Turk Street flat:

My Dear Joe,

> Many thanks for the prompt sending of the books. They will sell quick, I believe. You have become worse than me in changing your plans, I see....
>
> I am working hard -- making some money -- and am getting better in health. Work morning and evening, go to bed at 12 p.m. after a heavy supper! -- and trudge all over the town! And get better too!...
>
> I am very peaceful and quiet, and things are going anyway -- just they go. With all love, Vivekananda.
>
> P.S. Miss Waldo is just the person to undertake editing *Karma Yoga* with additions etc[7].
>
> In April the swami wrote to Joe:
>
> ... I am physically worse than at Los Angeles, mentally much better, stronger, and peaceful. Hope it will continue to be so.
>
> ... I don’t know whether I will make enough in Frisco to pay my fare to Chicago! Oakland work has been successful. I hope to get about $100 from Oakland, that is all. After all, I am content. It is better that I tried. There is nothing in Cali’s Land for me. Even the magnetic healer had not anything for me. Well, things will go on anyhow for me; I do not care how.... I have nothing more to say; all love and gratitude is yours; already you know that. You have already done more than I ever deserved. I don’t know whether to go to Paris or not, but I must go to England sure in May. I must not go home without trying England a few weeks more. With all love,
>
> Ever yours in the Lord, Vivekananda[8]

As long as Joe took the backseat approach, having brought together all the proper elements for success, things usually turned out well. When she tended to take more charge of matters, things sometimes became muddled. In the matter of Joe’s healer, Mrs. Melton, Swami Vivekananda expressed vividly his exasperation in a letter to Sara Bull, dated April l. In part it reads:

... I, of course, would not write this to Joe; she is happy in her dreams of having done so much good to poor sufferers. But, oh, if she could hear the Los Angeles folks, she would change her mind at once and learn wisdom from an old adage not to recommend medicine to anyone.... Doing good is not always smooth!

As for me, I get the fun out of it -- as long as Joe pays -- bone-cracker, or skin-parer, or any system whatever. But this was not fair of Joe -- after having got in all these people to get rubbed down [by Mrs. Melton], to run off and let me bear all the compliments!... I sent in a Christian Science healer to [one man] as a make-up of Joe’s misdemeanour, but his wife slammed the door in her face and would have nothing to do with queer healing.[9]

[1] New Disc., 5:307.[2] Ibid., pp. 312-13.[3] New Disc., 6:98-99.[4] New Disc., 5:345-46.
[5] CW8:498-99.[6] New Disc., 5:348.[7] CW8:506-07.
[8] Ibid., pp. 508-09.[9] Ibid., pp. 510-11.

NEW YORK STORM

In the meantime, there was trouble at the Vedanta Society of New York. Swami Vivekananda had founded this organization in November 1894 after much consideration of the pros and cons of organizing Vedanta work. Essentially, however, he had done so in this case so that his books could be published and funds could be administered. There had been neither membership rolls nor dues. Devotees had made voluntary contributions to pay the rent on lecture halls. Swami Abhedananda, sent by Vivekananda in 1897 to carry on the work of the Society, had incorporated it in October 1898 under the laws of the State of New York. In March 1900 the Society trustees established a membership roll and dues structure. One month later the swami amended the by-laws, giving the swami-in-charge of the Society a necessary control over its activities.[1]

On the surface the trouble stemmed from a disagreement over Society policies. Beneath the surface, the problem was altogether different. According to Sara Ann Levinsky, writing in *A Bridge of Dreams*, the real question was, who controlled the Society? She states:

On the one hand, the swamis of the Ramakrishna Order came at the invitation of the American people and were considered their guests. The foreign chapters belonged not to the parent organization in India, but to the local members who sponsored them. Thus, Vivekananda's American disciples had a reasonable basis for claiming hegemony in the Society. Besides, their financial contributions kept the work going. But Swami Abhedananda had been empowered by his spiritual brother Vivekananda to be more than a functionary. He was the teacher and spiritual leader of the group, and had his own claim to authority, a claim he did not take lightly.[2]

Swami Abhedananda stood on one side and Joe MacLeod, Francis Leggett, and Sara Bull stood on the other. Frank Leggett was President of the Vedanta Society, and it seemed to Swami Abhedananda that Sara Bull had turned Frank against him, after three years of their having worked together with no friction.[3]

Frank himself had for a some time now observed what he called "the frequent unbalancing effect of Vedanta teaching[4]." Frances Leggett also later stated her suspicion that her father's experience at Ridgely the previous fall had been too much for him. In *Late and Soon* she wrote: "The high spirits to which both Betty and Joe were naturally prone seemed at times to [have gotten] out of hand. Was it associated with Swami's return from India?... Margot's [Nivedita's] influence was as great as Joe's; their emotional abandon was helping to lift the family to an exalted plane. It was getting too much for Frank. He had accepted Vivekananda in his own way; the present curious movement of levitation left him with both feet planted firmly on the ground."[5]

Earlier that winter, Betty had known that her husband was considering resigning from his office at the Vedanta Society. In a letter dated February 11, 1900, she let him know she would not stand in his way.[6]

Swami Abhedananda wrote to Francis Leggett, asking that he resign as president of the Vedanta Society[7]. When Vivekananda heard about the New York storm, he wrote to Joe on April 10. His letter shows his own detachment, the freedom he gave others to work, and his complete trust and faith in her judgement, knowing that she, Frank Leggett, and Sara Bull would act in mutual accord. He wrote in part:

Dear Joe,

> There is a squabble in New York, I see. I got a letter from Abhedananda stating that he was going to leave New York. He thought Mrs. Bull and you have written lots against him to me. I wrote him back to be patient and wait, and that Mrs. Bull and Miss MacLeod wrote only good things about him.

Well, Joe Joe, you know my method in all these rows; to leave all rows alone! "Mother" sees to all such things. I have finished my work. I am retired, Joe. "Mother" will work now Herself. That is all.

...You tell Mr. Leggett from me to do what is best about the Vedanta Society matter. The only thing I see is that in every country we have to follow its own method. As such, if I were you, I would convene a meeting of all the members and sympathisers and ask them what they want to do. Whether they want to organize or not, what sort of organisation they want if any, etc. But Lordy, do it on your own hook. I am quits. Only if you think my presence would be of any help I can come in fifteen days.

With all love,
Ever yours affectionately, Vivekananda

PS If the workers are all averse to organising, do you think there is any benefit in it? You know best. Do what you think best.[8]

Within one week Frank Leggett had resigned the presidentship of the Vedanta Society.[9]

On April 12, Swamiji wrote to Sara Bull expressing what may have been a sudden inspiration for solving the New York squabble. His letter indicated that he wanted to found an organization in San Francisco and that he intended to ask Swami Abhedananda to come and take charge of the work there. "He can have all the organization here he wants," he wrote.[10]

And two days later, on April 14, he did found the Vedanta Society of San Francisco. According to the official minutes, twenty-five people who had attended Swamiji's lecture that evening in the Social Hall of the Red Men's Building met in an adjoining anteroom to discuss the feasibility of forming a society. Officers were elected, dues established, and arrangements made for future meetings and programs[11]. The society was called the "Vedanta Class," which within a year was changed through usage alone to Vedanta Society. By 1902 it was officially called the Vedanta Society of San Francisco[12], and it later became known as the Vedanta Society of Northern California.

On April 18 Vivekananda gave his final public lecture in San Francisco. His subject: "The Practice of Religion." After this date, his talks were confined to four classes on the Bhagavad Gita, held in May during meetings of the newly-formed Vedanta Class. In that last lecture he said: "We are here for freedom, for knowledge. We want to know in order to make ourselves free. That is our life: one universal cry for freedom.... The infinite human soul can never be satisfied but by the Infinite itself...."[13]

[1] New Disc., 6:257; also, Sara Ann Levinsky, A Bridge of Dreams, p. 85.
[2] Sara Ann Levinsky, A Bridge of Dreams, p. 85.
[3] Sara Ann Levinsky, A Bridge of Dreams, p. 85.
[4] Late and Soon, p. 123.
[5] Late and Soon.
[6] Early Draft Late and Soon, p. 103.
[7] Sara Ann Levinsky, A Bridge of Dreams, p. 86.
[8] CW8:515-16.
[9] Letters SN I, ;=123, p. 336.
[10] New Disc., 6:101-02.
[11] New Disc.., pp. 102-04.
[12] New Disc.., p. 107.
[13] cw 4:239-40.

THE GREAT LETTER

That day, before giving this lecture, Swamiji had written to Joe what has surely become his best known letter. This moving letter, written straight from his heart, in which he expressed extreme detachment, longing and determination to be free of all work, and profound stillness of mind and body, became a part of Joe's life and being; it became her personal touchstone -- her talisman. Joe was now in London on her way to Paris, and from the moment she read it, it became part of the permanent contents of her purse. In her own reminiscences she has stated very simply:

It was from Alameda, California, he wrote me on April eighteenth 1900, the most beautiful letter I think he ever wrote. This is the last letter [published] in *Inspired Talks*.[1]

The letter reads:

My Dear Joe,

Just now I received yours and Mrs. Bull's welcome letter. I direct this to London. I am so glad Mrs. Leggett is on the sure way to recovery.

I am so sorry Mr. Leggett resigned the presidentship.

Well, I keep quiet for fear of making further trouble.

You know my methods are extremely harsh and once roused I may rattle A. too much for his peace of mind.

I wrote to him only to tell him that his notions about Mrs. Bull are entirely wrong.

Work is always difficult; pray for me Joe that my works stop forever, and my whole soul be absorbed in Mother. Her works, She knows.

You must be glad to be in London once more -- the old friends, give them all my love and gratitude.

I am well, very well mentally. I feel the rest of the soul more than that of the body. The battles are lost and won. I have bundled my things and am waiting for the great deliverer.

"Shiva, O Shiva, carry my boat to the other shore."

After all, Joe, I am only the boy who used to listen with rapt wonderment to the wonderful words of Ramakrishna under the Banyan at Dakshineswar. That is my true nature; works and activities, doing good and so forth are all superimpositions. Now I again hear his voice; the same old voice thrilling my soul. Bonds are breaking -- love dying, work becoming tasteless -- the glamour is off life. Only the voice of the Master calling -- "I come Lord, I come." "Let the dead bury the dead, follow thou Me." -- "I come, my beloved Lord, I come."

Yes, I come. Nirvana is before me. I feel it at times -- the same infinite ocean of peace, without a ripple, a breath.

I am glad I was born, glad I suffered so, glad I did make big blunders, glad to enter peace. I leave none bound, I take no bonds. Whether this body will fall and release me or I enter into freedom in the body, the old man is gone, gone forever, never to come back again! The guide, the Guru, the leader, the teacher has passed away; the boy, the student, the servant is left behind.

You understand why I do not want to meddle with A. Who am I to meddle with anyone, Joe? I have long given up my place as a leader -- I have no right to raise my voice. Since the beginning of this year I have not dictated anything in India. You know that. Many thanks for what you and Mrs. Bull have been to me in the past. All blessings follow you ever! The sweetest moments of my life have been when I was drifting: I am drifting again -- with the bright warm sun ahead and masses of vegetation around -- and in the heart everything is so still, so calm -- and I am drifting languidly -- in the warm heart of the river! I dare not make a splash with my hands or feet -- for fear of breaking the marvelous stillness, stillness that makes you feel sure it is an illusion!

Behind my work was ambition, behind my love was personality, behind my purity was fear, behind my guidance the thirst of power! Now they are vanishing, and I drift. I come! Mother, I come! In Thy warm bosom, floating wheresoever Thou takest me, in the voiceless, in the strange, in the wonderland, I come -- a spectator, no more an actor.

Oh, it is so calm! My thoughts seem to come from a great, great distance in the interior of my own heart. They seem like faint, distant whispers, and peace is upon everything, sweet, sweet peace -- like that one feels for a few moments just before falling into sleep, when things are seen and felt like shadows -- without fear, without love, without emotion. Peace that one feels alone, surrounded with statues and pictures -- I come! Lord, I come!

The world *is*, but not beautiful nor ugly, but as sensations without exciting any emotion. Oh, Joe, the blessedness of it! Everything is good and beautiful; for things are all losing their relative proportions to me -- my body among the first. Om That Existence!

I hope great things to come to you all in London and Paris. Fresh joy -- fresh benefits to mind and body.

With love as ever to you and Mrs. Bull.

Yours faithfully,
Vivekananda[2]

Joe freely shared this powerful letter with both dear friends and new friends wherever she went, and it has become one of the most frequently-quoted letters Swami Vivekananda ever wrote. Years later, that letter would be lost, but by that time its contents would be firmly imprinted on Joe's mind.

It is ironic that two days after Swami Vivekananda wrote this stirring message of love, peace, and benediction, he received a vexed letter from Joe which had crossed with his in the mail and which brought from his pen a rapid rejoinder, scolding her for her involvement in the New York squabble. Joe, it seemed, was trying to drag him into the disagreement when he had already told her (in his letter of April 10) that his method "in all rows was to leave all rows alone."

Written before she left New York, Joe had asked on behalf of herself and Betty that he write to Swami Abhedananda and make certain points clear to him. Joe had also enclosed a letter written by Swami Abhedananda. Swami wrote back to her sharply not to meddle anymore. This letter, in which Joe gets her wrist slapped, also includes a not-only-that-but volley from Swamiji directly to Joe's face, so to speak, that Mrs. Melton *did not benefit him*. His letter, written from Alameda on April 20, reads in part:

My Dear Joe,

I am so sorry this little quarrel came with Abhedananda. I got also his letter you sent. He is correct so far as he says, "Swami wrote me, 'Mr. Leggett is not interested in Vedanta and will not help any more. You stand on your own feet.'" It was as you and Mrs. Leggett desired me to write him from Los Angeles about New York -- in reply to his asking me what to do for funds.

Well, things will take their own shape, but it seems in Mrs. Bull's and your mind there is some idea that I ought to do something. But in the first place I do not know anything about what that is for, and I am no thought-reader. You simply wrote me a general idea that A. wants to keep things in his hands. What can I understand from it? What are the difficulties? Regarding what the differences are about, I am as much in the dark as about the exact date of the Day of Destruction! And yet Mrs. Bull's and your letters show quite an amount of vexation! These things get complicated sometimes, in spite of ourselves. Let them take their shape.

I cannot say, on my conscience, that I have been the least benefitted by Mrs. Milton. She has been good to me, I am very thankful. My love to her. Hope she will benefit others.

For writing to Mrs. Bull this fact, I got a four page sermon, as to how I ought to be grateful and thankful, etc., etc. All that is, sure, the outcome of this A. business!...

You and Mrs. Leggett wanted me to write him to be free and independent and that Mr. Leggett was not going to help them. I wrote it -- now what can I do? If John or Jack does not obey you, am I to be hanged for it? What do I know about this Vedanta Society? Did I start it? Had I any hand in it? Then again, nobody condescends to write me anything about what the affair is! Well, this work is a great fun....

Ever yours gratefully,
Vivekananda[3]

Swamiji also included a message to Joe in a letter he wrote to Sara Bull on May 18. Sara had written to him that the time had come for him to lay aside all financial concerns and live the life of a sannyasin, free from organization and ambition. Apparently Joe had also written to him in the same vein. In the letter he asks Sara to "please tell Joe that going amongst different people with message also does not belong to the Sannyasin -- for a Sannyasin is quiet & [in] retirement scarcely seeing the face of man."[4]

[1] Rems., pp. 240-41.
[2] CW6:431-33.
[3] CW8:518-19.
[4] New Disc., 6:165-66.

LAST DAYS IN AMERICA

On May 30, Swami Vivekananda left San Francisco, bound for Chicago, where he stayed about four days[1]. He arrived in New York on June 7. There he stayed with Swamis Abhedananda and Turiyananda at the new home of the Vedanta Society at 102 East Fifth-eighth Street, just off fashionable Park Avenue. Vivekananda considered the rental of an entire house a real milestone in the Society's history, and at a reception given for him on June 15 he told the devotees: "I have knocked at the door of New York three times; it never opened. But now I am very happy to see that the Society has a house of its own[2]."

Sister Nivedita was also in New York at this time, staying in the Leggetts' house, and she kept Joe informed of his doings. Two days after his arrival there she wrote to Joe, "[Swamiji] has evidently been ill again, very. Has had a slight operation, which is scarcely healed.... At present Swami is not even speaking of Paris -- and I am lyin' low and not sayin' nuffin'.... He is not in the inspired mood at present, but in the human -- which only you have power to love most[3]."

While the swami was in New York he gave a Saturday Gita class and a Sunday morning lecture each of the first four weekends. One person who saw him at five of his talks was Lillian Montgomery. Many years later when Joe MacLeod met her and heard her speak of Swami Vivekananda, she remarked that of all the impressions of him described by devotees, this woman's were most like her own[4]. (An excerpt from her reminiscences is given in Chapter Six.)

On July 20 the swami wrote to Joe, indicating that he would be sailing soon.

Dear Joe,

> Possibly before this reaches you I shall be in Europe, London or Paris as the chance of steamer comes.
>
> I have straightened out my business here. The works are at Mr. Whitmarsh's suggestion in the hands of Miss Waldo.
>
> I have to get the passage and sail. Mother knows the rest.
>
> My *intimate* friend did not materialise yet and writes she will be sometime in August, and she is dying to see a Hindu, and her soul is burning for Mother India. I wrote her that I may see her in London. Mother knows again.
>
> Mrs. [Collis Potter] Huntington sends love to Margot and expects to hear from her if she is not too busy with her scientific exhibits.
>
> With all love to "Sacred cow" of India [Sara Bull], to yourself, to the Leggetts, to Miss (what's her name?), the American rubber plant.
>
> Ever yours in the Lord,
> Vivekananda[5]

Swami Vivekananda made two very significant moves during his last days in America. First, in an on-the-spot moment of inspiration born of necessity, he designed the official Seal of the Ramakrishna Order. Laura Glenn, who later became Sister Devamata, wrote about it in "Memories of India and Indians":

Mrs. Crane, the housekeeper [at the Vedanta Society], told me that the Swami was sitting at the breakfast table one morning when the printer arrived. He said he was making a circular for the Society and wished to have an emblem to go on it; could the Swami suggest something? Swamiji took the envelope from a letter he had just received, tore it open and on the clean inner surface drew the waves, the swan, the lotus, and the sun circled by a serpent.... He threw the bit of paper with the design on it across the table and said, "Draw it to scale." Henry van Haagen, the printer, was an able draftsman as well as printer. He converted the rough sketch into a finished drawing.[6]

On July 24, perhaps within a day or so of creating the design, the swami wrote to Joe in Paris, reproducing the sketch and explaining it, symbol by symbol:

Dear Joe,
The sun=Knowledge. The stormy water=Work. The lotus=Love. The serpent=Yoga. The swan=the Self. The Motto=May the Swan (the Supreme Self) send us that. It is the mindlake. How do you like it? May the Swan fill you with all these anyway.
I am to start on Thursday next, by the French steamer *La Champagne***.** The books are in the hands of [Ellen] Waldo and [Theodore] Whitmarsh. They are nearly ready.
... I am well, getting better -- and all right till I see you next week.

Ever yours in the Lord,
Vivekananda[7]

Swami Vivekananda once interpreted the design to an artist in India, saying that the idea was that by the union of Karma, Jnana, Bhakti, and Yoga, the vision of the Paramatman (Supreme Self) is obtained.[8]

His second move was the making of a will. Katherine Whitmarsh later stated that her father, Theodore Whitmarsh, was present when Swami Vivekananda went to say good-bye to Frank Leggett. He heard him say that he would not be coming back to America, adding, “I’m going to India to die.” Then her father said to Vivekananda, “If you’re going to die, you should make a will.” The swami answered, “I have nothing to will.” Her father told him, “You have your books.” Then Vivekananda said, “If you’ll make out the will, I’ll sign it.” Theodore Whitmarsh had a trust fund set up to handle the publication and administration of funds from Swami Vivekananda’s books, and years later, when all the trustees had died, Joe MacLeod bought the trust fund and turned it over to Swami Nikhilananda, of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center in New York.[9]

On July 26 Swami Vivekananda sailed for Paris, bringing to a close his last remarkable year in America. Before he left, he told Swami Abhedananda: “I shall live only three or four years at the most.” When Swami Abhedananda remonstrated with him, saying “You must not talk like that; you are fast recovering your health,” the swami replied: “You do not understand me. I feel that I am growing very big. My self is expanding so much that at times I feel as if this body could not contain me anymore. I am about to burst. Surely this cage of flesh and blood cannot hold me for many days more.”[10]

[1] New Disc, p. 261.
[2] New Disc., p. 266.
[3] Letters SN I, ;=132, pp. 361-62.
[4] Culme-Seymour Coll., June 9, 1944.
[5] CW8:527-28.
[6] Sister Devamata, "Memories of India and Indians," PB, June 1932, p. 304.
[7] CW8:528.
[8] New Disc., 6:308.
[9] Whitmarsh, 1979.
[10] New Disc., 6:304-05.

WORK AND PLAY PARISIENNE (Part Three)

"You seem always to have been in true relationship to your own life -- and that is what no one else is. It is that which gives you the power of impersonality that you have."

--Sister Nivedita to Joe, September 28, 1900

When Josephine MacLeod finally wrote her reminiscences, her memory tended to amalgamate events that had taken place decades earlier, and thus slightly irregular bits of circumstance and chronology were tidied-up. It is known that she and Sara Bull (and probably Alberta Sturges) were in Paris by late April of 1900[1]. Betty Leggett's leg, after undergoing Mrs. Melton's treatments, was still mending, so she remained in New York.

Betty had already arranged to lease a house in Paris for the next six months, and sent ahead the family's faithful house-manager, George Laware, who sailed from New York, taking with him a team of horses and carriages for use by the Leggetts in Paris[2]. The Canadian-born George spoke French, and his responsibility would be to supervise the French staff in the running of the Paris house. Betty herself left for Paris a few weeks later, taking with her little Frances, now almost four years old, her governess, Miss Looker, and Mrs. Melton, the magnetic healer[3]. Hollister Sturges had been given a holiday from employment at his stepfather's wholesale firm, Francis H. Leggett & Company, and arrived in Paris in July. Sister Nivedita also arrived there in July.

When Frank Leggett reached Paris is uncertain. His daughter, Frances Leggett, later stated that none of what her father met with in Paris really expressed him. In *Late and Soon* she wrote:

For Betty it was fulfilment. She had her house abroad, she had got Frank to come, and the rest of them. For the first time they were all abroad and in lovely Paris -- for the first time and the last. For it was from there that Vivekananda went back to India never to return, and Frank never came abroad for an appreciable time again. Yet it must have been rather wonderful, with that fine house and all the entertaining, new friends, new people, and Swami there to add an exotic touch to their circle -- even if Frank didn't enjoy himself as much as was expected. But then, this that Betty wanted, that to her was perfection, was not his way. He was willing enough to have them all at Ridgely, in his own home as his guests however much they might disturb him. But in Paris he was nobody. Here he must trail around behind others with their inordinate admiration for everything foreign, for everything belonging to the old world and so glamorous, and he felt himself losing the meaning of what was *him*. He didn't mind paying, but it must be for things that expressed something of himself. All this extravagance of beauty and charm was fine enough as a spectacle, but not him at all. He couldn't live it and it was not in him to play up to things.

"Everyone seems to have heard of our party," Betty was to write to her daughter afterwards, complaining at the same time of Pater's growing querulousness and irritability. That he had felt outside this particular "party" and hadn't liked it, she could not see. Yet it was this that had made him so stubborn and morose. "I don't like being a guest in my own house," he was heard to say in Paris. "I don't like being Mrs. Leggett's husband."[4]

The house the Leggetts had rented for the season was located at 6 Place des Etats-Unis, (for the American Embassy was located nearby). It was five minutes from the Bois de Boulogne and from the Paris Exposition. It was not a large house, but quite "elegant in the extreme[5]." It had four storeys plus attic, *porte cochere* for carriages, a large salon for entertaining, and a garden in the back.

Joe's reminiscences state:

Later in 1900 my sister and Mr. Leggett took a house in Paris for the Exposition. We went over in June [actually April], and Swami followed in August. He stayed some weeks with us until he went to stay with Mr. Gerald Nobel, a bachelor. Afterwards he said of Mr. Nobel: "It is worth having been born to have made one friend as Mr. Nobel." So greatly he honoured this

friend of ours. We entertained largely during these six months, Swami coming nearly every day to luncheon[6].

It was Friday, August 3, when Swami Vivekananda's ship, the *Champagne*, pulled into Le Havre, and he wrote a note to Christine Greenstidle of Detroit saying that he had had a rough crossing from New York and that he would be in Paris that evening[7]. After docking, Swamiji took a train to Saint Lazare station in Paris. His cable to Betty Leggett announcing his arrival time at the train station had read, "*Arrive a huit hres St. Lazare* -- Vivekananda[8]." Probably he was met at the train station about eight o'clock that evening by Gerald Nobel, who often was on hand to greet any of the family or their friends when they arrived in Paris[9].

It has been thought that for some reason Swamiji did not go directly to see the Leggetts on August 3, but rather went to their household for the first time on the morning of August 4[10]. Now, however, we know that Swami Vivekananda did go to the Leggetts' house on the same evening he arrived in Paris. We have visited Ridgely Manor, and have seen the Guest Register which the Leggetts used for their Paris stay that year. There at the top of one page is the signature:

Vivekananda Aug 3rd 1900 India

Below his name he wrote in Sanskrit: *swasti astu vah pathi sada*, meaning, "Let all good (auspiciousness) always come to your path of life."

Swamiji did not, however, stay at the Leggetts' house that first night, but rather at the flat of Gerald Nobel. It is possible that though their house was large, the room which he was to be put up in simply was not ready on August 3. Or perhaps another guest had arrived unexpectedly and had been given the room originally intended for his use. Joe wrote the following morning to Sara Bull, who was in Brittany and who would have known of the swami's intended date of arrival. In that letter, Joe mentioned that Swamiji would be staying in the nursery, (which had been recently vacated when little Frances and Miss Looker left for the seaside). Joe's letter of August 4, written to Sara Bull, reads:

Swamiji arrived at 9 [last evening] looking like a boy, he has lost 30 pounds and is vigorous. The [Patrick] Geddesses come to lunch today to meet him. Fun?

He stayed at Gerald's last night, but comes to us today -- having the nursery. He, Gerald, Margot, and I are to dine on the Eiffel Tower....

Swami asked immediately after the "Sacred Cow of India."

Joe apparently showed this letter to the swami when he arrived later that morning, and he added his own note to Sara Bull in a postscript:

Hello-Sacred Cow! What are you doing in the forest; meditation or counting how many palpitations Mrs. [Marian] Briggs' heart gets a day?[11]

Sara Bull must have made a trip back to Paris very soon after the swami's arrival, for both she and Sister Nivedita signed their names (but did not give the date) in the Leggetts' Guest Register at 6 Place des Etats-Unis on the page opposite Vivekananda's signature.

Throughout most of his Paris days, the swami used the Leggetts' address as his headquarters for mail. On August 14, however, he used the return address of "boulevard Hans Swan," which, according to Swami Vidyatmananda, might be a misreading of "boulevard Haussmann which was near the Leggetts' house[12]. Another possibility is that the swami was simply making a pun on "hamsa" meaning swan, symbol of the Supreme Self.

Swami Vivekananda had come first to the West to participate in the Parliament of Religions at the gigantic World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in September 1893. Now seven years later, in September of 1900, he was to participate in the Congress of the History of Religions, which was one of eighty-six congresses being held in connection with the International Exposition. Many mind-boggling changes had taken place in those seven years and Paris had become, as it were, a magnificent showcase for the new and incredible Age of Science and Technology to which twentieth century mankind had awakened and which it would soon take as for granted as breathing.

In 1900 the electric light bulb was still considered a miracle, and was used extensively at the Exposition, as it had been in 1893 in Chicago. Now, however, it was on the brink of becoming more commercial and accessible. Swami Vidyatmananda has written in his article "Vivekananda in the Near East" that "the reflection in the Seine of numerous [electric light] bulbs was considered breathtaking. At the Palais de la Mettalurgie was displayed among other wonders a forty-foot-high electric generator[13]." The new use of electricity made possible the building of the Paris Underground Rail System, which opened on July 19, two weeks before the swami arrived in Paris. Five years earlier, Swami Vivekananda and the Leggetts had toured the city on an omnibus. Now they could, with speed and comfort, move about in a subway.

The automobile made its debut that summer, and the first traffic accidents also made theirs. By and large, however, the horse carriage was still the main means of transportation, with a very clackety four-hooved population of 100,000. Swami Vidyatmananda gives quite a picture of Paris as Swami Vivekananda saw it, writing:

A delirious joy reigned. There were balls and receptions nearly every evening, and "Venetian nights" on the river. A dinner was given by the City of Paris for all the mayors of France, and 22,000 of them came to dine. Fifty million people visited the Exposition, including many kings, crown princes, and grand dukes; the majority of the high nobility, for reasons best known to themselves, preferred to make the visit incognito[14].

For the first few weeks Swamiji went every morning to the Exposition, accompanied by Alberta Sturges, Francis Leggett, and Professor Patrick Geddes. The professor explained various fascinating details of the exhibits to the others; and the swami, whose nature was that of a top student, eagerly absorbed this new data and also contributed his own fresh insights, comparisons, and discoveries[15]. Joe was content "to get the gist of things from others" and did not go, saying she was not strong enough.[16]

Joe did, however, try to see to it that Swami Vivekananda was not overwhelmed with schedules. She accompanied him to lighter things -- places of interest and entertainment[17]. They went to see "the divine Sarah" [Bernhardt] in her magnificent performance as the tragic son of Napoleon. In "Memoirs of European Travel" [hereafter *Memoirs*] the swami wrote: "Madame Bernhardt is an aged lady [fifty-six], but when she steps on the stage after dressing [in costume], her imitation of the age and sex of the role she plays is perfect! A girl or a boy -- whatever part you want her to play, she is an exact representation of that."[18]

They went to see their friend Emma Calve in the role of Carmen at the Opera Comique;[19] and in *Memoirs* he wrote: "... with Calve's art is coupled a unique genius. Extraordinary beauty, youth, genius, and a celestial voice -- all these have conspired to raise Calve to the forefront of all singers. But there is no better teacher than pain and poverty! That extreme penury and pain and hardship of childhood ... have engendered a remarkable sympathy and a profound seriousness in her life."[20]

Joe also took Swamiji to the Louvre, where he spent hours. Later he wrote in great detail in *Memoirs* all he had learned there of the stages of Greek art.[21]

It is of note that on the one hand, Joe helped to bring Swamiji into contact with some of the most celebrated personages of his time, which tended to place him in a working mode, and on the other, managed to see to it that he also got to have some fun, relaxation, and rest. Then, having done all the facilitating, she sat back and watched the play.

Swami Vivekananda, writing in *Memoirs,* described the very elaborate at-homes the Leggetts had in their Paris mansion, which took place almost daily:

All types of distinguished personages -- poets, philosophers, scientists, moralists, politicians, singers, professors, painters, artists, sculptors, musicians, and so on, of both sexes -- used to be assembled in Mr. Leggett's residence, attracted by his hospitality and kindness. The incessant outflow of words, clear and limpid like a mountain-fall, that expression of sentiments emanating from all sides like sparks of fire, bewitching music, the magic current of thoughts from master minds coming into conflict with one another -- ... [held] all spellbound, making them forgetful of time and place -- ...[22]

Indeed, the turn of the century was alive with new thought and creativity generated by dozens of brilliant young thinkers and artists -- their names great or soon-to-be great. It is known that Swamiji met the famous sculptor Rodin; and it is very likely that he also met Claude Monet, visiting him in the country some forty miles from Paris. He may have also met Emile Zola, Anatole France, Henri Bergson, Camille Saint-Saens, Claude Debussy, and Maurice Ravel[23]. The Leggetts' Paris Guest Register in which Swami Vivekananda signed his name also contains the names of a good many members of the English and French aristocracy.

[1] Letters SN I, #124, p. 336.
[2] Late and Soon, p. 127.
[3] Late and Soon, p. 127.
[4] Late and Soon, pp. 127-28.
[5] Late and Soon, p. 127.
[6] Rems., p. 241.
[7] Swami Vidyatmananda, "Swami Vivekananda in the Near East" I, PB, March 1977, p. 92. Hereafter, "SV in Near East"I .]
[8] Swami Vidyatmananda, "Swami Vivekananda in France," PB, March 1967, p.128.[Hereafter, "SV in France."]
[9] Late and Soon, p. 29.
[10] Swami Vidyatmananda , "SV in France," p. 129.
[11] Swami Vidyatmananda , "SV in France,", p. 130.
[12] Swami Vidyatmananda , "SV in France,", p. 131.
[13] Swami Viclyatmanancla, "SV in Near East" I, p. 90.
[14] Swami Viclyatmanancla, "SV in Near East" I
[15] Life II, p. 538.
[16] Late and Soon, p. 128.
[17] Life II, p. 552.
[18] CW7:373.
[19] Swami Vidyatmanan cla , "Swami Vin:kananda in the Near East" I!, PB, April 1977, p. 189. [Hereafter, "SV in Near East" I!.]
[20] CW 7:375.
[21] CW 7, pp. 402-04.
[22] CW 7, p. 380.
[23] New Disc., 6:322-23.

A DIFFERENT KIND OF LUXURY

Swami Vivekananda gave one talk in August at the Exposition itself, which, according to Marie Louise Burke, was probably under the auspices of the International Association for the Advancement of Science, Arts and Education with which both Professor Geddes and Francis Leggett were associated as officers.[1]

Then at four o'clock on Friday afternoon, August 24, he gave a talk in the Leggetts' drawing room on "*La Religion et le philosophie des Hindoos*" to which many came. The formal invitation had been written in French, and probably he gave his talk in French, but that has not at this date been confirmed. It may have been on this occasion that he met a Frenchman named Jules Bois with whom he would soon go to live, with the idea of being forced to master French, Bois knowing no English. If they did meet on this date, then it seems likely that Swami Vivekananda's talk was given in French. (Another person who attended that talk at the Leggett house was Pere Hyacinthe Loyson, and he also spoke no English.)

Fascinated with the subjects of metaphysics and religion, Jules Bois had, in 1893, read the papers given at the Parliament of Religions that were reprinted in French journals. Later he wrote about his impression of "the young Hindu prophet who promulgated a universal religion," saying: "Though profound, his address was beautifully incisive, -- a refreshing contrast to the usual pronouncements of that kind, which are apt to be gelatinous. These sentences bore the stamp of genius, and they dwelt in my mind until the day when I received an invitation to meet the swami himself at the home of a rich American friend in Paris."[2]

That day Swami Vivekananda approached Jules Bois, spoke with him a few minutes, then startled him by asking if he could come and live with him. "I reminded him of the luxury and attention he was enjoying," Bois later wrote, "saying that I was only a young writer and could offer him very little in the way of comfort. 'I am a monk and a mendicant,' was his reply. 'I can sleep on the ground or on the floor. Our luxury will be the wisdom of the masters. I will bring my pipe with me, and upon its incense will rise the verses of the Vedas and Upanishads.'"[3]

Swami Vivekananda probably moved into the apartment of Jules Bois after September 3, and stayed with him at least four weeks[4]. Bois later wrote: "At the close of day I would find Vivekananda there [in the apartment], scarcely having moved from the spot where I had left him, but having smoked and meditated much."[5]

[1] New Disc, pp. 330-31.
[2] New Disc, p. 337.
[3] New Disc, pp. 337-38.
[4] New Disc, p. 338.
[5] New Disc

BOOMERANG AND CONFLICT

The previous spring, Sister Nivedita had written to Swami Vivekananda about Professor Patrick Geddes, whom she had met when she and Geddes and his wife, Anna, were all houseguests of the Leggetts in New York City[1]. The Leggetts had met Professor Geddes through Joe[2]. Geddes, with his original theories on the evolution of society in relation to environment and his particular interest in applying these ideas to mankind's problems, had aroused in Sister Nivedita spontaneous respect for him and a desire to help with his work. Prophetically, when Swamiji had received her letter with all its enthusiasm over Geddes, he had written back to her: "I enjoyed your accounts of Prof. Geddes, and Joe has a funny account of a clairvoyant[3]," perhaps indicating the seriousness with which she should take a relationship with Geddes.

Sister Nivedita had not caught on. She agreed to work for Geddes at the Paris Expo, cataloging, indexing, reporting, and writing[4]. She arrived in Paris in mid-July, stayed with the Leggetts for a while; then, finding their lavish entertainments too much of a distraction, she left and moved into an austere garrett with Patrick and Anna Geddes[5].

She soon realized her mistake. Writing to Joe from her garrett "cell," she admitted her inability to work for Geddes and implied that a valid forewarning had been offered earlier by Joe. Joe later said that Geddes was too elusive for Nivedita to grasp; that his "mind darted here and there and everywhere like a flame[6]." In a published letter incorrectly bracket-dated July 1, and probably written Thursday, August 2, Sister Nivedita wrote to Joe: "*I fail absolutely* to do what he wants. You have been right about the greatness of the freedom Swami gives. Freedom to be oneself and to express Him in one's own way is the height of divine and human giving. Oh how one's soul is beneath his feet! The infinite mercy of God that could clothe itself thus for our loving![7]

Then on Saturday evening, August 4, Sister Nivedita saw the swami when they had dinner with Joe and Gerald Nobel at the Eiffel Tower. Swamiji seemed very withdrawn. He seemed indifferent to her. She wondered if he felt she was not doing the work he had directed her to do. He had, after all, given her full freedom in which to work. Let down by his mood and by her own inadequacy in working for Geddes, she wrote to Sara Bull at Brittany, confiding her depression. Within two weeks she had left Paris and was Sara's guest.[8]

From Brittany, Sister Nivedita wrote to Vivekananda, being very frank with him, complaining, blaming him, and at the same time seeking his guidance and solicitude[9]. Within hours of mailing the letter, she was miserable over her rashness in saying such things to her guru. But it was too late. When he received the letter, he gave an immediate, terse reply, which is dated August 25, the day following his talk at the Leggetts' house. He wrote:

Your letter indicates that I am jealous of your new friends. You must know once for all I am born without jealousy, without avarice, without the desire to rule -- whatever other vices I am born with.

I never directed you before; now after I am nobody in the work, I have no direction whatever. I only know this much: So long as you serve "Mother" with a whole heart, She will be your guide.

... Only I do believe the Western people have the peculiarity of trying to force upon others whatever seems good to them, ... As such, I am afraid you might try to force upon others whatever turn your mind might take in contact with new friends. You are free, have your own choice, your own work....[10]

Aside from one postcard which he sent to her that fall, this was his last letter to her in 1900. (Two letters in the *Complete Works*, dated August 28 and December 19, 1900 are mistakenly identified as being written to her.)[11]

When Sister Nivedita received the swami's reply, she penned a letter to "Sweet Mother Yum," who was suffering from exhaustion and was planning to go to Brittany herself on September 6. Nivedita wrote:

You can afford [to be apart from Swami]. It will never, in your case I think, be for very long. I see you standing by Swami's side for years to come. "The goddess born to protect" Him -- our Divinest Incarnation.

I was not worthy or ready to accept the personal in Him with the loving welcome that it should have had -- and I am so thankful that there is one who is. I have never felt Dearest so free of all jealousy of you, all miserable sense of inefficiency by your side as I do today, when Swami has cut me off by a well-deserved stroke -- and you stand to be all in all.... Someday I shall come and kiss the hem of your garment -- because I shall love Him as you do -- having learnt it through separation and through you.... I do not feel that I can send Him a letter or a message or treat Him otherwise than as if He were literally dead....[12]

[1] Letters SN I, #116, pp. 321-25.

[2] Swami Ekatmananda, "Profiles in Greatness: Sir Patrick Geddes," PB, March 1986, p. 129. [Hereafter, "Profiles in Greatness."][3] Letters SV, p. 419.[4] Letters SN I, #137, p. 369[5] Swami Ekatmananda, "Profiles in Greatness," PB, March 1986, p. 129.[6] Swami Ekatmananda, "Profiles in Greatness," PB, March 1986, p. 130[7] Letters SN I, #137, p. 368.

[8] Letters SN I, #145, p. 382.[9] SNRV, p. 116.[10] Letters sv pp. 431-32.[11] New Disc., 6:349.[12] Letters SN I, #147, pp. 385-86.

WOOD, RAGS, WHITEWASHING, AND CRANKS

By the time of the Congress, Swami Vivekananda had been in Paris one month, and he had now seen Paris and Parisians in a more thorough way than during his briefer visit in 1895. On September l he penned a quick and incisive appraisal of the French in a letter to Swami Turiyananda, who was in California. “The people of France,” he wrote, “are mere intellectualists, they run after worldly things and firmly believe God and souls to be superstitions; they are extremely loath to talk on such subjects. This is a truly materialistic country! Let me see what the Lord does. But this country is at the head of Western culture and Paris is the capital of that culture.”[1]

Also by this time, most of those close to Swamiji were away from Paris and would not be there for the Congress. Sister Nivedita and Sara Bull were in Brittany; Betty and Francis Leggett had gone to Germany for more cures for her leg; Hollister Sturges had returned to America[2]. But Joe was there, and she, Alberta, and Vivekananda probably attended the opening session on September 3, which was held at the Palais des Congres on the Expo grounds. Dr. Lewis Janes and Professor Patrick Geddes may have accompanied them.[3]

Sectional meetings were held at the Sorbonne all that week, and Swami Vivekananda spoke twice on Friday, September 7 at one of those meetings. The Congress was a rather dry affair, its purpose being to enquire into the historical evolution of the different forms of established faiths. Swamiji later wrote: “The Chicago Parliament of Religions was a grand affair, and the representatives of many religious sects from all parts of the world were present at it. This Congress, on the other hand, was attended only by such scholars as devote themselves to the study of the origin and history of different religions.”[4]

Having received word from Joe of Swamiji’s appearance at the Sorbonne, Betty Leggett wrote back, “What I would give for a photograph of him with the Puvis de Chavannes background!” -- referring to a 75-foot-long mural which runs the entire length of the wall behind the podium of the Grande Amphitheatre[5]. The swami’s talks, however, were delivered not in the amphitheatre but in the Department of Historical and Philological Sciences[6].

On the same day the Congress opened, the swami wrote a funny description of an imaginary “Congress of Cranks” and sent it to Betty to cheer her up. It is certain that such a party did not take place, as Sara and Sister Nivedita were in Brittany. Perhaps it was his way of poking quiet fun at the dry scholars who had convened in Paris, of whom he had already had his fill after having been only to the opening session. Swami Vidyatmananda points out that Swamiji’s use of the colloquialism “cranks” shows how completely he had grasped Western language and attitudes. “These pioneer Vedantists of the West,” Swami Vidyatmananda writes, “all of them now historical figures due largely to their association with Vivekananda, were to the world of 1900 real eccentrics, and he the biggest eccentric of them all[7].” Swami Vivekananda’s letter:

Dear Mother,

> We had a congress of cranks here in this house.
> The representatives came from various countries, from India in the south, to Scotland in the north, with England and America buttressing the sides.
> We were having great difficulty in electing the president, for though Dr. [Lewis Janes][8] was there, he was more mindful of the blisters raised on him by Mrs. Melton than solution of world problems.
> I proposed Joe but she refused on the ground of non-arrival of her new gown -- and went to a corner to watch the scene, from a coign of vantage.
> Mrs. Bull was ready, but Margot objected to this meeting being reduced to a comparative philosophy class.

When we were thus in a fix -- up sprung a short, square, almost round figure from the corner, and without any ceremony declared that all difficulties will be solved, not only of electing a president but of life itself, if we all took to worshipping the Sun God and Moon God. He delivered his speech in five minutes; but it took his disciple, who was present, fully three quarters of an hour to translate. In the meanwhile, the master began to draw the rugs in your parlour up in a heap, with the intention, as he said, of giving us an ocular demonstration of the power of "Fire God", then and there.

At this juncture Joe interposed and insisted that she did not want a fire sacrifice in her parlour; whereupon the Indian saint looked daggers at Joe, entirely disgusted at the behaviour of one he confidently believed to be a perfect convert to fire worship.

Then Dr. [Janes] snatched a minute from nursing his blisters and declared that he would have something very interesting to speak upon Fire God and his brethren, if he were not entirely occupied with the evolution of Meltonian blisters. Moreover, his great Master, Herbert Spencer, not having investigated the subject before him, he would stick to golden silence.

"Chutney is the thing," said a voice near the door. We all looked back and saw Margot. "It's Chutney," she said, "Chutney and Kali, that will remove all difficulties of life, and make it easy for us to swallow all evils, and relish what is good." But she stopped all of a sudden and vehemently asserted that she was not going to speak any further, as she had been obstructed by a certain male animal in the audience in her speech. She was sure one man in the audience had his head turned towards the window and was not paying the attention proper to a lady, and though as to herself she believed in the equality of the sexes, yet she wanted to know the reason of that disgusting man's want of due respect for women. Then one and all declared that they had been giving her the most undivided attention, and all above the equal right, her due, but to no purpose. Margot would have nothing to do with that horrible crowd and sat down.

Then Mrs. Bull of Boston took the floor and began to explain how all the difficulties of the world were from not understanding the true relation between the sexes. She said, "The only panacea was a right understanding of the proper persons, and then to find liberty in love and freedom in liberty and motherhood, brotherhood, fatherhood, Godhood, love in freedom and freedom in love, in the right holding up of the true ideal in sex."

To this the Scotch delegate [Professor Patrick Geddes] vehemently objected and said that as the hunter chased the goatherd, the goatherd the shepherd, the shepherd the peasant, and the peasant drove the fisher into the sea, now we wanted to fish out of the deep the fisher and let him fall upon the peasant, the peasant upon the shepherd, and so on; and the web of life will be completed and we will be all happy. He was not allowed to continue his driving business long. In a second everyone was on his feet, and we could only hear a confusion of voices -- "Sun God and Moon God", "Chutney and Kali", "Freedom holding up right understanding, sex, motherhood", "Never the fisherman must go back to the shore", etc. Whereupon Joe declared that she was yearning to be the hunter for the time and chase them all out of the house if they did not stop their nonsense.

Then was peace and calm restored, and I hasten to write you about it.

Yours affly,
Vivekananda.[9]

From this humorous letter, we get a picture of how Swamiji saw Joe. With Betty away, Joe was in charge of hosting. But unlike the elegant soirees that Betty had managed there, this party of Joe's was intensely casual. Vivekananda knew that after Joe returned to the West from India in 1899, a grand style of entertaining no longer appealed to her, and that she preferred to let everybody sit around on the floor. A more important and elemental point made about Joe's hosting is that Swamiji had her doing what she did naturally: going to a corner to "watch the scene from a coign of vantage." From there she would not miss seeing what went on, but would also not get too involved. She would remain the cool-minded witness who sees all the moves of the players. This was Joe MacLeod.

[1] CW8:534.[2] Letters SN I, #146, p. 383.[3] Swami Vidyatmananda, 'Vivekananda at the Paris Congress 1900" I, PB, March 1969, p. 113. [Hereafter, ·Paris Congress" !.][4] cw 4:422.[5] Swami Vidyatmananda, "Paris Congress" I, p. 114.[6] Swami Vidyatmanand, "Swami Vivekananda at the Paris Congress" !I, PB, April 1969 , p. 186. [Hereafter, "Paris Congress" !!.] [7] Swami Vi dyatmananda , "SV in France, " p. 123.[8] Marie Louise Burke explains why this person must have been Dr. Lewis Janes rather than Dr. James, as stated in Vivekananda's letter. (See New Discoveries, Volume 6.)
[9] CW6:436-39

BENEDICTION

It is probable that by September 4, Swamiji had joined Jules Bois in his flat on the fifth floor of 39 Rue Gazan. He probably stayed there several weeks, leaving only to travel twice with Bois to Brittany. By September 6, Joe herself was in Brittany; and Sara and she penned an immediate invitation to Swamiji and Jules Bois to come there for a visit. Their invitation was upsetting to Alberta, who, with everybody gone, was now hostess at the Leggetts' house. She wrote to "Tante," complaining: "[Swamiji] is dreadfully sorry you invited them up to Brittany, says he is nervous and so is Mrs. Bull, that he enjoyed seeing Paris, was meeting all the artists and thinkers, Rodin, etc.,... [and that] now he won't be able to learn French; that had you had asked *him* he would have refused, but that Bois (being a poor man) naturally jumped at the idea so...."[1]

Joe would have smiled when she read Alberta's piqued letter, knowing very well how she herself would have felt if this had happened to *her*. But she and Sara had their reasons for inviting him to Brittany. Nivedita was in pain over her relationship with her guru, and her pain was theirs.

Sara Bull had come to Brittany, renting a small house from a Mlle. de Wolska, a friend of Joe's. Joe had met her in 1897 in New York and had found her to be "our sort," meaning that she was "all enthusiasm over Vedanta and its prophet." The woman even offered to translate Swami Vivekananda's *Raja Yoga* into French[2]. Mlle. de Wolska owned a number of small houses and larger villas in Brittany, and Sara eventually acquired through her a small compound in which to house her guests that summer and fall of 1900. On Monday, September 17, when Swami Vivekananda and Jules Bois arrived in the little fishing village of Perros-Guirec, they were settled into a villa which Sara may have rented from a different source, a family named Allain.[3]

According to investigation done by Swami Vidyatmananda in 1967, the main villa Sara Bull rented was probably one known as Villa St. Guirec, 11 Rue de Trestrignel. It was a sizable stone house with eight rooms and servants' quarters, and there were two stone cottages nearby. The property had a stone wall around it and a garden connecting the villa and the two cottages. Across the road was the Bay of Perros. One of the little cottages had (in 1900) one storey with two rooms, and this may have been where Swami Vivekananda and Jules Bois stayed. The other cottage was used by the Allain family whenever the main house was rented out.[4]

Here Swamiji had the constant choice of solitude or company, as Sara also had as guests Joe, Sister Nivedita, Marian Briggs, and a Norwegian man and his daughter. Also in a nearby chateau was Mrs. Melton (now going by the name Lady Walden) who was "trying to work a miracle on the half-mad son of an aged countess."[5]

Once Swami Vivekananda had remarked that Sara Bull seemed to him "the only person who ever knew exactly how to give -- so quietly -- and never making a mistake[6]." Her hosting was likely done in the same manner: very quietly, with much planning ahead and little confusion later. Like Joe, she would have let all her guests have the run of the place with the options of doing nothing when wishing to do nothing, or going for walks along the rugged boulder-strewn seacoast or in the narrow lanes bordered with centuries-old hedgerows. Of interest to Swami Vivekananda would have been the many *calvaires* erected at road crossings. A *calvaire* is a pillar of granite crowned with a carved figure of Christ on the cross or other images associated with the Passion.[7]

Local residents of Perros-Guirec, interviewed in 1967 by Swami Vidyatmananda, included Monsieur LeGuyon, who had been twenty-seven years old in 1900 and who recalled the distinguished American lady (Sara), and her "elegantly-dressed" companion (probably Joe, but

possibly Nivedita), and a foreign gentleman with a strange accent. The foreign gentleman and the companion woman often walked in the afternoon to the Pointe du Chateau, a rocky formation jutting out into the sea where they spent much time in conversation. None of these people spoke much French, he said[8]. Monsieur LeGuyon described the foreign gentleman as about forty, with dark hair and dressed like a European. He was very lively and always smiling.[9]

Another neighbor, who was interviewed in 1967 by Swami Vidyatmananda, was Madame Rose Lemeur. She had been nineteen years old in 1900 and had made deliveries for local merchants in Perros-Guirec. She remembered being impressed by the foreign gentleman who was staying in one house at that time, and she described him as *bel homme, bien poli*, a handsome man; very refined. Although she had always addressed him as Monsieur, she and others in the neighborhood thought of him as *le pasteur* -- not a Catholic priest but nevertheless a member of the clergy. Seeing a photo of Swami Vivekananda, she said she was sure this was the same man.[10]

While in Brittany, Sister Nivedita came to a decision. She would return to England and try to find means for the Indian work. Later she wrote that after dinner on the night before she was to leave, Swami Vivekananda called her out from her arbor study into the garden. In 1967, Swami Vidyatmananda discovered on the Allain property a little grotto, grown over with vegetation, nestled in the hollow of what must once have been an enormous tree. Remembering that the French word for tree is *arbre*, he concluded that this must have been what Nivedita had meant. In *The Master* she wrote:

I knew nothing as yet of the length of my stay [in England]. I had no plans, and the thought may have crossed his mind that old ties were perilous to a foreign allegiance. He had seen so many betrayals of honor that he seemed always to be ready for a new desertion. In any case, the moment was critical to the fate of the disciple, and this he did not fail to realise.

[In the garden that night he said]: "There is a peculiar sect of Mohammedans, who are reported to be so fanatical that they take each newborn babe, and expose it, saying, 'If God made thee, perish! If Ali made thee, live!' Now this which they say to the child, I say, but in the opposite sense, to you, tonight -- 'Go forth into the world, and there, if I made you, be destroyed! If Mother made you, live!"

Yet he came again next morning, soon after dawn, to say farewell, and in my last memory of him in Europe, I look back once more from the peasant market-cart, and see his form against the morning sky, as he stands on the road outside our cottage ... with hands uplifted, in that Eastern salutation which is also benediction.[11]

It was to be eighteen months before Nivedita again saw Swami Vivekananda. By that time she would be very involved in Indian politics through new contacts made in London. This involvement was to bring on many scoldings from her guru when next they met in the spring of 1902, for taking political stands had been marked as incompatible with the aims of the Ramakrishna Order.

We believe that on that last night in Brittany, Swamiji would have foreseen that Nivedita was at another crossroads in her life and that she had many trials and lessons to face before her vision cleared and she became a true worker. His blessing was to give her the strength to face those trials and lessons as well as his own scoldings of her. He would also have foreseen the greatness of her future achievements and the reverence with which all India would one day regard her. Again and again he had given her complete freedom in the work, for he never considered it *his* work; it was always *Sri Ramakrishna's work*. On July 29, 1897 he had written to her: "I shall stand by you until death, whether you work for India or not, whether you give up Vedanta or remain in it. 'The tusks of the elephant come out, but they never go back.' So are the words of a man never retracted."

Before returning to Paris at the end of September, Swamiji and Jules Bois, accompanied by Joe and Sara, visited the famous Benedictine monastery, Mont Saint Michel. Built on a tiny island off the coast of Normandy according to directions said to be received by the Archangel

Michael, it is considered to be the finest cloister built in the thirteenth century[12]. At the monastery, which had been used as a prison as late as the mid-1800s, the swami saw a dungeon cage, suspended by a giant hook in the ceiling, and immediately commented, "What a wonderful place for meditation!"[13]

Joe returned to Brittany after their visit to Mont Saint Michel and wrote to Sister Nivedita. The tone of Nivedita's return letter to Joe hints that Joe must have told her of Emma Calve's generous offer to take Swamiji on a tour of Egypt and other places[14]. In her own reminiscences Joe tells how that offer came about:

One day at luncheon in Paris [probably in August] Madame Emma Calve, the singer, said she was going to Egypt for the winter. So as I suggested accompanying her, she at once turned to Swami and said, "Will you come to Egypt with us as my guest?" He accepted.[15]

We believe it is more likely that Swami Vivekananda thought over the invitation to take this tour and that he finally made up his mind while he was in Brittany, for, to our knowledge, it was not until October 14 that he mentioned the trip in correspondence. Writing in French on that date to Christine Greenstidle, he reported that Jules Bois would accompany them and that they would visit Constantinople, the Near East, Greece, and Egypt. They were to leave on October 24. In that letter, as translated, he wrote:

It seems to me that a new chapter of my life is opening. It seems to me that Mother will now lead me slowly and softly. No more effort on roads full of obstacles, now it is the bed prepared with birds' down....

As to myself, I see the cloud lifting, vanishing, the cloud of my bad Karma. And the sun of my good Karma rises -- shining, beautiful, and powerful.[16]

Before going on this tour, however, Swamiji and Bois went back to Brittany in mid-October, staying about four days[17]. Upon his return to Paris, he moved to Gerald Nobel's flat where he spent his last four days in Paris. There he met with Hiram Maxim of rapid-fire machine gun fame who had had a big exhibit at the Exposition, and who gave him letters of introduction that would be helpful during his tour[18]. Maxim had heard Vivekananda speak at the Parliament of Religions in 1893, and had written about the swami's appearance at the Parliament in the foreword of a book he authored about Christian missionaries in China. The two had later met in London[19]. In his book, *Li Hung Chang's Scrap-Book*, published in 1913, he wrote:

When Vivekananda spoke, [the American Protestants] saw that they had a Napoleon to deal with. His first speech was no less than a revelation.... Here was a specimen of the unsaved who knew more of philosophy and religion than all the parsons and missionaries in the whole country. [After that] missionary income fell off more than a million dollars a year in consequence.[20]

In *Memoirs* Swami Vivekananda wrote: "Everything on earth has an end. Once again I took a round over the Paris Exhibition today [October 23] -- this accumulated mass of dazzling ideas, like lightning held steady as it were, this unique assemblage of celestial panorama on earth!... We too shall be happy to escape. The breaking up of the Exhibition is a big affair; the streets of this heaven on earth, the Eden-like Paris, will be filled with knee-deep mud and mortar. With the exception of one or two main buildings, all the houses and their parts are but a display of wood and rags and whitewashing -- just as the whole world is!"[21]

Frances Leggett wrote in *Late and Soon* about Swamiji's time in Paris: "Whereas he had once acclaimed [the West] in boyish wonder, he was sobered now by its shortcomings, prophetic even of its coming agony. [He said:] 'The world is now in the third Epoch under the domination of [the merchants]; the Fourth will be the coming of [the proletariat]; the next upheaval ushering in the new era will be from Russia or China. I cannot see which, but it will be from the East[22].'" And to Joe he said: "Europe is a volcano. If India does not come to help her she will blow up."[23]

Before leaving on the tour with Swamiji, Joe went to say goodbye to all the household staff at 6 Place des Etats-Unis and to George Laware, who had supervised the smooth operation of the Paris house all those months. When she asked George how he had enjoyed the Exposition, he

replied that he hadn't seen any of it, that he hadn't left the house the entire summer or fall. "Not left the house? Why ever not?" she asked him. "I felt I should stay in to keep an eye on things," was his reply. Joe never got over it; and this became a pet story of hers to share with other employees over the years, setting before them George's perfect example of dedication and devotion to duty.[24]

[1] Swami Vidyatmananda, ··sv in France," p. 134.
[2] New Disc., 6:350.
[3] Swami Vidyatmananda, "Swami Vivekananda in Brittany and Normandy," PB,March 1968, p. 119. [Hereafter, "Brittany and Normandy."]
[4] Swami Vidyatmananda, "Brittany and Normandy," pp. 121-22.
[5] New Disc., 6:352.
[6] letters SN I, #55, p. 178.
[7] Swami Vidyatmananda, "Brittany and Normandy," p. 118.
[8] Swami Vidyatmananda, "Brittany and Normandy., p. 119.
[9] Swami Vidyatmananda, "Brittany and Normandy, p. 121.
[10] Swami Vidyatmananda, "Brittany and Normandy, p. 123.
[11] CWSN l:151.
[12] Swami Vidyatmananda, "Brittany and Normandy," p. 127.
[13] CWSN l:154.
[14] Letters SN I, #151, p. 389.
[15] Rems., p. 241.
[16] Letters SV, p. 440.
[17] Swami Vidyatmananda, "Britany and Normandy," p. 127.
[18] CW7:378.
[19] New Disc., 6:319-21.
[20] New Disc., 6:319-21.
[21] CW7:380-81.
[22] Late and Soon, p. 133.
[23] Swami Vidyatmananda, "SV in Near East" I, p. 91.
[24] Early Draft Late and Soon, p. 13.

ANOTHER JAUNT!

On the evening of Wednesday, October 24, Swami Vivekananda and his party boarded the famed *Orient Express*; and thus began the final chapter of his second visit to the West. Though he had stated his intention to return to Paris after the tour and give some lectures[1], it was not to be. For months now, since he had been in California, the powerful current of his will had been moving him more and more inward, reducing his outward activities and driving him towards home.

Emma Calve had paid for deluxe accommodations every step of the way; and Marie Louise Burke has set the scene for the first leg of their journey by providing details of the grand elegance of the *Orient Express* on which Vivekananda, Joe MacLeod, Emma Calve, and Jules Bois travelled. She writes:

The *Orient Express* was a magnificently furnished and fitted train-deluxe, consisting from Paris to Vienna of five cars -- two sleepers, a diner, and two baggage cars.... Its two-berth compartments were paneled in inlaid mahogany and were luxuriously carpeted and appointed; its seats were upholstered in velvet, with antimacassars of fine Brussels lace; its windows were draped in red damask; its dining car gleamed with crystal and silver; its cuisine was epicurean. This embodiment of imperial elegance, its teakwood sides painted a royal blue and emblazoned with a coat of arms, swept at a stately forty miles an hour through France, Germany, and Austria-Hungary, slowing to a more cautious thirty miles an hour through Serbia, Bulgaria, and the European part of Turkey to the Bosporus -- a journey all told of 1750 miles, during the course of which the cars changed locomotives twenty-one times.[2]

Swami Vivekananda's *Memoirs* include three paragraphs packed full of insightful commentary on Germany, which they passed through the first morning, and a tribute to the city they had just left. He wrote: "After Paris there is no other city in the Western world; everywhere it is an imitation of Paris -- or at least an attempt at it. But in France that art is full of grace and ethereal beauty, while in Germany, England, and America the imitation is coarse and clumsy[3]."

By afternoon the train had reached Austria and that evening, Vienna. Two Archdukes were getting off the train at Vienna, and until they had done so, other passengers had to wait. The swami and his party were in Vienna for almost three full days. They visited the Schonbrunn Palace, the Art Gallery, and the Museum. About the Museum, he stated: "The thing most worth seeing in Vienna is the Museum, specially the Scientific Museum, an institution of great benefit to the student[4]." About the Schonbrunn Palace, the swami characterized it as "ordinary" and touched with barest brevity on its lavishness.

Joe later said that it was probably in Vienna that one day she cut and saved some hair from Vivekananda's head[5]. The three days in Vienna were sufficient to tire him. He and his party left on the evening of October 28, and travelled two nights and a day through the Balkans. About the Balkans, he wrote: "There are three civilized nations in Europe -- the French, the Germans, and the English. The rest are almost as badly off as we [Indians] are, and the majority of them are so uncivilized that you can find no race in Asia so degraded.... [Sooner] or later they will all one day be absorbed by Russia."[6]

On Tuesday, October 30, the party reached Constantinople. The next day, Swamiji and Joe went to Scutari to see Pere Hyacinthe Loyson and his wife, who had been on the *Orient Express* with them from Paris until Vivekananda's party got off at Vienna. The swami had met Loyson on August 10 in Paris and, as previously mentioned, he had attended the talk Vivekananda had given at the Leggetts on August 24[7].

Pere Hyacinthe Loyson was a former Carmelite monk who had been excommunicated from the Roman Catholic Church because he refused to accept the doctrine of Papal Infallibility. Devoted to and outspoken about various social and church reforms, he had, before his excommunication, been an eloquent and immensely popular preacher at Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris. His program of proposed reforms included many points that were taken up one

hundred years later by the Second Vatican Council (1962-63)[8]. He was now married to an American woman, and they had one son.

Swamiji wrote in *Memoirs*: "[The day after arriving] we started on an excursion along the Bosporus in a boat. It was extremely cold and there was a strong wind. So I and Miss MacLeod got down at the first station. It was decided that we would cross over to Scutari and see Pere Hyacinthe. Not knowing the language [Turkish and Arabic] we engaged a boat by signs merely, crossed over, and hired a carriage."[9]

On arriving in Constantinople, Loyson had been officially warned that he was not to give a single lecture anywhere in the Ottoman Empire, including Jerusalem, by order of the Sultan[10]. For this reason he had gone to Scutari, which lies across the strip of water that separates Europe from Asia Minor. There both he and Vivekananda did lecture.

In the late 1920s Joe MacLeod talked to Romain Rolland about Pere Hyacinthe. "Pere Hyacinthe," [he recorded in his diary], "always appeared to be somewhat sheepish and anxious; unsure of himself; searching for approval. He would always say, 'Isn't it so? If my son is special, it will be a sign that I did the right thing. Do you think so?'"[11]

The Loysons were staying at the American College for Girls. The swami had a long talk with Hyacinthe, then they all had a picnic in a Moslem cemetery, a place favored by Turks for picnics, the cypress trees forming a cathedral atmosphere[12].

The trip back to Constantinople was more difficult for Swamiji and Joe, as they had trouble finding their boat, and upon landing found themselves far from their hotel which they had to return to by tram[13].

On Friday, November 2, Pere Hyacinthe Loyson, Swami Vivekananda, and Jules Bois all gave talks at the American College for Girls. These talks were presumably in French, which was the preferred language of higher education in Turkey[14]. According to Emma Calve's diary, the talks were on the three philosophers: Carlyle, Emerson, and Nietsche, but according to Loyson's journal, Swami Vivekananda spoke on Hinduism.[15]

[1] CW8:537.
[2] New Disc., 6:384.
[3] CW7:381-82.
[4] CW7, p. 389.
[5] Culme-Seymour coll., March 13, 1939.
[6] CW7:391.
[7] Swami Vidyatmananda, "S,vami Vi,•ekananda and Pere Hyacinthe Loyson," PB, March 1971, p. 120. [Hereafter '·SV and Loyson."]
[8] Swami Vidyatmananda, "SV and Loyson, pp. 113, 118.
[9] CW7:398.
[10] CW7, p. 399.
[11] Inde, May 16, 1927, p. 208.
[12] Swami Vidyatmananda, "SV in Near East" I, p. 97.
[13] CW7:399.
[14] Swami Vidyatmananda, "SV in Near East" II, p. 198.
[15] Ibid., p. 192; and "SV and Loyson," p. 124.

PERPETUAL INSPIRATION!

On November 10 at ten in the morning, Vivekananda and his party left by steamer for Athens. They passed a night and a day on a perfectly placid sea, according to *Memoirs*, and reached the Golden Horn and the Sea of Marmora. They put in once at Marmora to visit a Greek Orthodox monastery[1], and on another island they came upon the ruins of a temple which Swamiji judged to have been dedicated to Neptune, God of the Sea. Emma Calve's reminiscences which follow give an idea of what it was like to travel with Swami Vivekananda:

What a pilgrimage it was! Science, philosophy and history had no secrets from the swami. I listened with all my ears to the wise and learned discourse that went on around me. I did not attempt to join in their arguments, but I sang on all occasions, as is my custom....

When we were in Greece we visited Eleusis. He explained its mysteries to us and led us from altar to altar, from temple to temple, describing the processions that were held in each place, intoning the ancient prayers, showing us the priestly rites[2].

And in Emma Calve's travel diary, she recorded: "To live close to the Swami is a perpetual source of inspiration; we live in an intense spiritual atmosphere. For him every occasion inspires parables, quotations, ranging from Hindu mythology to the profoundest philosophy. Sometimes he is gay, full of fun, ready with rapid repartee, joking and laughing like a child. He is inexhaustible in telling us interesting stories. He possesses a voice like a cello with low vibrations that one cannot forget, and which fills both lecture halls and hearts."[3]

The party left for Egypt on November 13 or 14 on the Russian ship, the *Czar*[4]. According to Emma Calve's record:

[In] Egypt one unforgettable night, he led us again into the past, speaking to us in mystic, moving words, under the shadow of the silent sphinx.

The Swami was always absorbingly interesting, even under ordinary conditions. He fascinated his hearers with his magic tongue. Again and again we would miss our train, sitting calmly in a station waiting-room, enthralled by his discourse and quite oblivious of the lapse of time. Even Miss MacLeod, the most sensible among us, would forget the hour, and we would in consequence find ourselves stranded far from our destination at the most inconvenient times and places.

One day we lost our way in Cairo. I suppose we had been talking too intently. At any rate, we found ourselves in a squalid, ill-smelling street, where half-clad women lolled from windows and sprawled on doorsteps. The Swami noticed nothing until a particularly noisy group of women on a bench in the shadow of a dilapidated building began laughing and calling to him. One of the ladies of our party tried to hurry us along, but the Swami detached himself gently from our group and approached the women on the bench.

"Poor children!" he said. "Poor creatures! They have put their divinity in their beauty. Look at them now!"

He began to weep. The women were silenced and abashed. One of them leaned forward and kissed the hem of his robe, murmuring brokenly in Spanish, "*Hombre de Dios! Hombre de Dios!*" (Man of God!) Another, with a sudden gesture of modesty and fear, threw her arm in front of her face as though she would screen her shrinking soul from those pure eyes.[5]

Joe's reminiscences continue:

[In] Egypt ... after a few days Swami said, "I want to go." "Go where?" I asked. "Go back to India." I said, "Yes, go." "May I?" he asked. "Certainly," I said. So I went to Madame Calve and said, "Swami would like to go back to India." She said, "Certainly." She bought him a first class ticket and sent him back.[6]

Swamiji's "*May I*?" and Joe's "*Certainly*" show their mutual consideration of wants and needs. As Joe always tried to protect him from invasion of freedom and rest by others, she herself was able to back away when he obviously needed space and privacy.

Later Emma Calve recalled that when she spoke to Swami Vivekananda about his returning to India, he said to her, "I want to go back to India to die and I want to be with my brothers." She

said to him, “But, Swamiji, you cannot die, we need you.” Then he told her he would die on the fourth of July.[7]

It is also said that he had a strong intuition that Captain Sevier was dying and that he wanted to return to India for this reason. Marie Louise Burke states, however, that it is more probable that belated news of Sevier’s illness had caught up with the party in Egypt, for the Captain had actually died a month earlier after an illness.[8]

It may have been on his last day in Cairo that Swami Vivekananda told Joe two conclusions he had reached about the West and its role in carrying the message of Vedanta. First he told her that after visiting America this second time he had concluded, “America will not be the instrument to harmonize East and West[9].” Then he told her that he had had very big hopes for the United States when he went there the first time (1893-1896); that he could only see the great things about it. But that during his second trip he had been shocked by American imperialism and its social vices and racial pride. “Therefore,” he told Joe, “it will be China or Russia that will accomplish the Work[10].”

Vivekananda left his companions on Sunday, November 25, and probably travelled by train from Cairo or El Giza to Port Tewfick near Suez at the south end of the Suez Canal. From there he was to board a steamer to Bombay, the Italian *Rubattino*, coming from Naples. The ship was late, and there was some confusion about his ticket. He probably boarded the *Rubattino* on the evening of November 26. Sailing down the Gulf of Suez into the Red Sea, he headed for home[11]. His letter to Joe, written November 26 from Port Tewfick, gave details.

Dear Joe

The steamer was late; so I am waiting. Thank goodness, it entered the Canal this morning at Port Said. That means it will arrive some time in the evening if everything goes right.

Of course it is like solitary imprisonment these two days, and I am holding my soul in patience.

But they say the change is thrice dear. Mr. Gaze’s agent gave me all wrong directions. In the first place, there was nobody here to tell me a thing, not to speak of receiving me. Secondly, I was not told that I had to change my Gaze’s ticket for a steamer one at the agent’s office, and that was at Suez, not here. It was good one way, therefore, that the steamer was late; so I went to see the agent of the steamer and he told me to exchange Gaze’s pass for a regular ticket.

I hope to board the steamer some time tonight. I am well and happy and am enjoying the fun immensely.

How is Mademoiselle? Where is Bois? Give my everlasting gratitude and good wishes to Mme. Calve. She is a good lady.

Hope you will enjoy your trip.

Ever affectionately yours,
Vivekananda[12]

Joe later said that by the time Swamiji left for India, her own health was on the downside. She had just enough energy to join a Cook’s tour of the Nile, where Emma Calve was to meet up with her. On Thanksgiving Day, November 29, she wrote to Sara Bull, who was now in Paris. It should be noted that in those days, the term “heart attack,” which she mentioned casually in this letter, did not have the same meaning as it does today.

... I am *alone* on the Nile. Swamiji returned to India on Sunday last -- & is due there *Dec. 6th the full moon*.

He was eager to go -- & I was too poorly to urge him to stay -- even Luxor & Karna failed to induce him to remain over.

I may remain in Southern Egypt some time -- I have no plans. -- I am somewhat better but feel it will take the entire winter in quiet to recoup --

Swamiji was not very well -- had another heart attack -- & was radiant about going to India -- bless him --...[13]

Swami Vivekananda arrived at Belur Math to the surprise of his brother monks on the evening of Sunday, December 9. Two days later, on December 11, he wrote:

Dear Joe,

I arrived night before last. Alas! my hurrying was of no use. Poor Captain Sevier passed away a few days ago -- [*actually a month earlier*] thus two great Englishmen [*John Sevier and J. J. Goodwin*] gave up their lives for us -- us the Hindus. This is martyrdom if anything is. Mrs. Sevier I have written to just now to know her decision.
I am well, things are well here -- every way. Excuse this haste. I will write longer ere long.

Ever yours in truth,
Vivekananda[14]

Since receiving in August of 1900 a copy of the trust deed that had been prepared for the running of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, Swamiji had been apprehensive about how the many details of its management would be carried on in his absence. Now, in India again, and able to see for himself what condition the Math and its affairs were in, he found that he had misjudged things. On December 26, Joe's forty-second birthday, he wrote to her. She and Sara Bull had sometimes remarked on his harshness in dealing with his brother disciples. Marie Louise Burke has pointed out that Joe and Sara "had small conception of the profundity and constancy of [the swami's] love for his fellow monks and of the immense importance of their future work[15]." He wrote to clear the air about the condition of the Math and his loving relation with his brothers and newfound and complete confidence in their abilities. Excerpts from his letter follow:

Dear Joe,

The cause has already two martyrs [*Capt. John Sevier and J. J. Goodwin*]. It makes me love dear old England and its heroic breed. The Mother is watering the plant of future India with the best blood of England. Glory unto Her!
...I am calm and strong. Occasion never found me low yet; Mother will not make me now depressed....
They [brother disciples] have worked all right as far as they could; I am glad, and feel myself quite a fool on account of my nervous chagrin.
They are as good and as faithful as ever, and they are in good health. Write all this to Mrs. Bull and tell her she was always right and I was wrong, and I beg a hundred thousand pardons of her.

Oceans of love for her and for [Margot].

I look behind and after
And find that all is right.
In my deepest sorrows
There is a soul of light.
All love to [Margot], Mrs. [Calve], to Dear [Jules Bois], and to you, Dear Joe, Pranams.

Vivekananda[16]

Just one year before, Joe had been with Swami Vivekananda in Los Angeles. They had greeted each other on the Solar New year, December 21; they had been together for her birthday on December 26; and they had brought in the New Year and the New Century together. Though she would not have received this letter in time for her birthday, December 26, 1900 was still very special as she was about to embark with newfound friends for Japan *via India*.

[1] Life II, p. 556.
[2] New Disc., 6:395.
[3] Swami Vidyatmananda, "SV in Near East" II, p. 195.
[4] New Disc., 6:394.
[5] New Disc., pp. 395-96.
[6] Rems., p. 241.
[7] New Disc., 6:397.
[8] New Disc., p. 398.
[9] Swami Nikhilananda, Viveka nanda: A Biography, p. 163.
[10] Inde, May 14, 1927, pp. 199-200.
[11] New Disc., 6:401.
[12] CW8:539-40.
[13] New Disc., 6:399-400.
[14] CW6:439.
[15] New Disc., 6:355-56.
[16] CW6:440-41.

SEPARATION AND SURVIVAL (CERTAIN PEOPLE MUST MEET) (Part One)

Even when Joe was in her eighties, she remembered vividly the details of her association with Swami Vivekananda during the last eighteen months of his life. In her published reminiscences, she writes about what happened to her after he left Cairo:

Going up the Nile and meeting some charming English people who begged me to go to Japan with them, I had occasion to pass again through India en route. Again I saw Swamiji, and he said he would go to Japan if I wrote for him.[1]

Joe was in Calcutta by the end of January, 1901. In February she saw Jules Bois, who had come there after leaving Vivekananda's party in Cairo. Later Bois wrote in *Visions de l'Inde* about meeting Joe at the Great Eastern Hotel and recognizing "her steely glance and her profile." By boat she took him to Belur and Swami Vivekananda. Bois recorded:

We have fled past the town.... The waters of the Ganges are rising around us and a favourable tide is carrying us towards the monastery, all white -- in its palm grove -- over which rises the trident of the Pagoda. The monastery beckons to us from its complaisant terraces.

The American lady has become grave. She remembers having heard in New York this Vivekanando [sic] who charms the Souls.... [When I met her today she cried,] "How small is the world. The earth is only a crossway where wanderers cross each other."

Vivekanando is standing on the terrace. His big eyes seem to have eaten up his visage. This man -- with almost a swarthy complexion -- and dressed as the Aryans six thousand years ago -- born so far from my corner of the earth -- speaking another tongue and adoring another God -- has been my best friend. He ... incarnated for me -- with his genius and his perilous frenzy -- that India which I cherish as the Fatherland of my dreams -- the Eden where lives the Ideal....

These are [the swami's] first words at the threshold of his house -- "I am free, my friend -- I am liberated anew. I have given all. The money weighed me down like chains. I am now the poorest man in the poorest country in the world. But the House of Ramakrishno has been built, and his spiritual family has received a shelter."

He saw the American [Joe] and saluted her with gentle gesture....[2]

By mid-February Joe was on her way to Japan via Bombay. On the 17th Swami Vivekananda wrote to her in part:

Dear Joe,

> ... I hope you will go to Baroda and see the Maharani.
> I am much better and hope to continue so for some time. I have just now a beautiful letter from Mrs. Sevier in which she writes a whole lot of beautiful things about you.
> I am so glad you saw Mr. Tata and find him so strong and good.
> I will of course accept an invitation if I am strong enough to go to Bombay.... Do wire the name of the steamer you leave by for Colombo.
>
> With all love, Yours affectionately,
> Vivekananda[3]

Jamsetji Tata, referred to in this letter, was a well-known business magnate of Bombay. Vivekananda had met him aboard ship between Yokohama and the United States on his way to the Parliament of Religions in 1893 and had expressed to Tata his intense desire that India's scientific talents and natural resources be developed to help solve her many problems. In 1898 Tata had publicly announced his offer to India of an income-producing property for the establishment of a scientific institute for post-graduate, specialized studies by Indian youth under Indian management. His magnanimous gesture was applauded vigorously by Indian society. The British government had "serious misgivings."[4]

It happened that Joe MacLeod, when she first came to India in 1898, had met Tata's right-hand aide, Burjorji Padshad; and through this connection she was able to introduce Sister Nivedita to Tata. This led to Nivedita's later work on the famous Tata's Research Scheme, which

represented to Vivekananda "a living hope for the actualization of a cherished dream[5]." Sister Nivedita, fired up by her love for India and firm in her anti-British-interference stance, devoted much time over the remaining years of her life to writing letters and articles to promote Tata's envisioned institute of science. Jamsetji Tata did not live long enough to see the founding of that Institute in July of 1911.

Tata had been in Paris for the Exposition the previous fall, and he and Vivekananda had probably seen each other then. Joe kept in touch with those who might be able to help Swamiji. Now in Bombay, she had stopped and made contact with Tata again.

Joe reached Japan sometime in March. Her reminiscences continue:

In Japan I made the acquaintance of Kakuzo Okakura, who had founded the fine arts Bijutsuin school of painting in Tokyo. He was very anxious to have Swami come over and be his guest in Japan.[6]

In Japan Joe also met Anne Hellyer and her husband, who were friends of Frank Leggett. Joe visited them in Kobe. Then for a time she lived in a Buddhist Temple at Asokusa, Tokyo[7].

Since November of 1896 Joe had known of Swami Vivekananda's interest in Japan, and she and Kakuzo Okakura tried their utmost to induce him to come to Japan[8]. At her request, Okakura sent Rs. 300 to Vivekananda for his passage. On June 14 the swami wrote to Joe, penning some of his choicest blessings on her and indicating that he might go to Japan. He wrote:

Dear Joe,

> I am so glad you are enjoying Japan -- especially Japanese art. You are perfectly correct in saying that we will have to learn many things from Japan. The help that Japan will give us will be with great sympathy and respect, whereas that from the West unsympathetic and destructive. Certainly it is very desirable to establish a connection between India and Japan.
>
> As for me, I was thrown *hors de combat* in Assam. The climate of the Math is just reviving me a bit. At Shillong -- the hill sanatorium of Assam -- I had fever, asthma, increase of albumen, and my body swelled to almost twice its normal size. These symptoms subsided, however, as soon as I reached the Math. It is dreadfully hot this year; but a bit of rain has commenced, and I hope we will soon have the monsoon in full force. I have no plans just now, except that the Bombay Presidency wants me so badly that I think of going there soon. We are thinking of starting touring through Bombay in a week or so....
>
> Now, Joe dear, if I am to go to Japan, this time it is necessary that I take Saradananda with me to carry on the work. Also I must have the promised letter to Li Huang Chang from Mr. Maxim; but Mother knows the rest. I am still undecided.
>
> So you went to Alanquinan to see the foreteller. Did he convince you of his powers? What did he say? Write particular *s'il vous plait*.
>
> ... You also are determined to drag Mrs. Bull down to Japan from Norway all the way -- *bien, Mademoiselle, vous etes use puissante magicienne, sans doute* [you can undoubtedly work magic]. Well, Joe, keep health and spirits up; the Alanquinan man's words come out true most of them, and *glorie et honneur* await you -- and Mukti.
>
> The natural ambition of woman is through marriage to climb up, leaning on a man; but those days are gone. You shall be great without the help of any man, just as you are, plain, dear Joe -- our Joe, everlasting Joe....
>
> We have seen enough of this life to care for any of its bubbles, have we not Joe? For months I have been practising to drive away all sentiments; therefore I stop here, and good-bye just now. It is ordained by Mother we work together; it has been already for the good of many; it shall be for the good of many more; so let it be. It is useless planning, useless high flights; Mother will find Her own way;... rest assured.
>
> Ever yours with love and heart's blessings
> Vivekananda

PS Just now came a cheque for Rs. 300 from Mr. Okakura and the invitation. It is very tempting, but Mother knows all the same.[9]

In this letter, Swami Vivekananda mentioned his poor health. The last photos of him ever taken -- at Shillong in 1901 -- show how ill he was. Again, on June 18 he wrote:

Dear Joe,

I enclose with yours an acknowledgement of Mr. Okakura's money -- of course I am up to all your tricks.

However, I am really trying to come, but you know -- one month to go -- one to come -- and a few days' stay! Never mind, I am trying my best. Only my terribly poor health, some legal affairs, etc. etc., may make a little delay.

With everlasting love,
Vivekananda[10]

The summer of 1901 Swamiji's health grew still worse. On July 14, he wrote from the Math:

My dear Joe,

I am ever so glad to hear W. is coming to Calcutta. Send him immediately to the Math. I will be here. If possible, I will keep him here for a few days and then let him go again to Nepal.

Yours ever in the Lord,Vivekananda[11]

Then, in a letter dated simply 1901 but surely July 1901, he wrote again, letting her know how much her wishes meant to him.

Dear Joe,

I can't even in imagination pay the immense debt of gratitude I owe you. Wherever you are you never forget my welfare; and then you are the only one that bears all my burdens, all my brutal outbursts.

Your Japanese friend has been very kind, but my health is so poor that I am rather afraid I have not much time to spare for Japan. I will drag myself through the Bombay Presidency even if only to say, "How do you do?" to all kind friends....

So kindly pay the money your Japanese friend has sent for my passage. I shall give it back to you when you come to India in November.

I have had a terrible collapse in Assam from which I am slowly recovering. The Bombay people have waited and waited till they are sick -- must see them this time.

If in spite of all this you wish me to come, I shall start the minute you write....

Ever yours with love,
Vivekananda[12]

He also wrote to Okakura, saying, "Japan to me is a dream, so beautiful that it haunts one all his life."[13]

In the meantime, Joe was not just visiting Japan; she was learning. From May to early November of 1901 she took lessons from Okakura at his Bijutsuin (or fine arts academy) on the history of Japanese art[14]. But still she persisted in her quest to open a new field of work for Vedanta. In September she sent a telegram to Swamiji urging him to come to Japan. However, to his two earlier reasons for not going there (poor health and such a long voyage) he now added a third in the form of the rhetorical question: "What am I to talk [about] to them?"[15]

At this time Joe's health was also on the downside. One year earlier, in Paris, she had had to take to her bed with exhaustion; and only the thought of being with Vivekananda again, plus the rest in Brittany, had enabled her to make the tour with him and Emma Calve. But by the time he had "asked" her if he could leave Cairo, she had been too weak to try and detain him. Now, one year later, on October 30, 1901, she wrote to Sara Bull admitting that after six months of relative freedom from distress it might take her another year to fully recuperate[16].

It is said that knowledge of Truth gives one vitality, not only spiritually and mentally but physically. And Swami Vivekananda was often to say, "The thing which makes you strong, that is Truth." Joe lived with Truth from the moment she met Vivekananda. Many years later

a doctor was to remark that she lived on sheer willpower; that her bones were so brittle, he could take two fingers and break every bone in her body[17]. So ill health or not, Joe was never one to give up easily once she had set her mind on something. And in Japan she was determined and persevering when she saw that "certain people should meet." She therefore invited Okakura to come with her to India[18]. In November their travel plan, which was rather complicated, was smoothed out, and she notified Swami Vivekananda that they would leave Japan in early December, accompanied by Hori, a zealous young Buddhist priest.[19]
On November 8 Swamiji wrote:

My Dear Joe,

> ... I have been ever since my trip to East Bengal almost bedridden. Now I am worse than ever with the additional disadvantage of impaired eyesight. I would not write these things, but some people require details, it seems.
> Well, I am so glad that you are coming over with your Japanese friends -- they will have every attention in my power....
> I do not know whether it will be possible to see the Orissan temples in company with your Japanese friends. I do not know whether I shall be allowed inside myself -- owing to my eating "Mlechchha" food. Lord Curzon was not allowed inside.
> However, your friends are welcome to what I can do always. Miss [Henrietta] Muller is in Calcutta. Of course she has not visited us.
>
> Yours with all love
> Vivekananda[20]

The reader will recall that Henrietta Muller had publicly defected from Vivekananda two years earlier.
On November 25, Swamiji wrote to Sister Christine referring to a mix-up in posting his letters, one to her having been sent to Joe; one to Joe having been sent to her. He wrote:
Perhaps Miss MacLeod is bringing [your] letter with her, as she is coming over to India from Japan herself, accompanied by her Japanese converts (males of course, as she is a lady missionary).
... Poor Miss Joe, so she remains ignorant as to real cause of my not going over to Japan! You need not be the least anxious -- there is no harm done; and if there were, Joe and especially Mrs. Bull make it their life's duty to befriend those I love.[21]
Swamiji may have been referring in the last line to the possibility of Sister Christine's coming to India. Joe had indeed received the misdirected letter, but had simply mailed it on to Christine.[22]
Joe, Okakura, and Hori left Japan on December 7 and were in Calcutta on January 6, 1902[23]. The men were given accommodations at Belur Math, and Joe stayed at the American Consulate in Calcutta by permission of General Patterson[24]. That first evening the swami met with Kakuzo Okakura, and said to him, "We are two brothers who meet again, having come from the ends of the earth."[25] Okakura was charmed with Swamiji's personality and genius and within a few days wrote to a friend: "He is a superb scholar in high spirits. He is such a prominent figure that people of the entire earth respect him...."[26]

Joe's reminiscences continue:
... Swami refusing to come [to Japan], Mr. Okakura accompanied me to India to meet him. One of the happy moments of my life was when after a few days at Belur, Mr. Okakura said to me rather fiercely, "Vivekananda is ours. He is an Oriental. He is not yours." Then I knew there was a real understanding between them. A day or two after, Swami said to me, "It seems as if a long lost brother has come." Then I knew there was a real understanding between these two men. And when Swami said to him, "Will you join us?" Mr. Okakura said, "No, I haven't finished with this world yet." Which was a very wise thing.[27]

[1]Rems., p. 241.
[2] Jules Bois, Excerpts from Visions de l'Inde, PB, March 1918, pp. 57-58.
[3] CW5:157.
[4] Sankari Prasad Basu, "Vivekananda, Nivedita, and Tara's Research Scheme," PB, October 1978, pp. 414-15.
[5] Sankari Prasad Basu, "Vivekananda, Nivedita, and Tara's Research Scheme," PB, October 1978,, p. 412.
[6] Rems., p. 241.
[7] Friends Coll., Josephine Mac Leod to Frances Leggett, 1941.
[8] Life II, pp. 598-99; and Yasuko Horioko, "Okakura and Swami Vivekananda's Disciples," PB, March 1977, p. 118. [Hereafter "Okakura & Vivekananda's Disciples."]
[9] CW5:162-63.
[10] CW5, p. 164.
[11] PB, April 1949, p. 140.
[12] PB, April., pp. 164-65.
[13] Life II, p. 599.
[14] Yasuko Horioko, "Okakura & Vivekananda's Disciples," p. 119.
[15] Life II, p. 600.
[16] Letters SN I, append. #23, p. 454.
[17] Whitmarsh, 1983.
[18] Yasuko Horj_oko, "Okakura & Vivekananda's Disciples," p. 118.
[19] Life II, p. 619.
[20] CW5:171.
[21] "Unpublished Letters of Swami Vivekananda," PB, June 1978, p. 270.
[22] Unpublished Letters of Swami Vivekananda," PB, June 1978,, p. 272.
[23] Yasuko Horioko, "Okakura & Swami Vivekananda," PB, January 1975, p. 32. [Hereafter "Okakura & SV."]
[24] Life II, p. 620.
[25] Life II., p. 619.
[26] Life II., p. 619
[27] Rems., pp. 241-42.

A FIT ENDING

On January 27, 1902, Swami Vivekananda, Okakura, and Joe started for Buddha Gaya [also called Bodh Gaya]. About their stay there, Sister Nivedita wrote:

When the winter again set in, [the swami] was so ill as to be confined to bed. Yet he made one more journey, lasting through January and February 1902, when he went first to Buddha Gaya and next to Varanasi. It was a fit ending to all his wanderings. He arrived at Buddha Gaya on the morning of his last birthday [January 29], and nothing could have exceeded the courtesy and hospitality of the Mahanta (head of the monastery). Here, as afterwards at Varanasi, the confidence and affection of the orthodox world were brought to him in such measure and freedom that he himself stood amazed at the extent of his empire in men's hearts. Buddha Gaya, as it was now the last, had also been the first of the holy places he had set out to visit [in the spring of 1886]. And it had been in Varanasi, some few years back (when he was an unknown monk), that he had said farewell to one with the words, "Till that day when I fall on society like a thunderbolt, I shall visit this place no more!"[1]

One of the party going on that journey was Sri Nareshchandra Ghosh, who had the opportunity of serving the swami during the last stage of his life. He later recalled:

It is not possible to describe the joy which I feel even now. Okakura had come from Japan, and Swamiji went with him to show Buddha Gaya. Miss MacLeod was with us. Kanai Maharaj [Swami Nirbhayananda] was the chief attendant to Swamiji. His helpmates were Neda and myself.... Okakura had a letter from the then Viceroy, Lord Curzon, with him, and a telegram was sent in advance. As a result, at Gaya station some Government officers had come to receive the party. They cordially welcomed the party and made arrangements for our stay at the dak bungalows....

Swamiji went to see the Vishnu pada padma [footprint of Vishnu]. Then after finishing breakfast in the morning [of January 29], all went to visit Buddha Gaya in horse carriages. We reached there about 10 to 11 a.m. The temple gate was in front of the Mahanta's house.... The Mahanta ... came to receive the Swami [and] as soon as Swamiji got down from the carriage, the Mahanta prostrated before him. Then the whole party went inside....

Immediately arrangements were made for Swamiji's stay in a big house, and ... separate arrangements were made for Miss MacLeod and Okakura in the same house.

The Mahanta Maharaj used to have discussions with the Swami for about two hours daily, either in the morning or in the afternoon, on various religious subjects....

We stayed at Buddha Gaya for about a week. Swamiji would visit the temple daily, and explain to us the architecture and the historicity of each image. In the northwestern corner of the house there was an image of Buddha from Japan. The expression on its face and mode of sitting were much like Swamiji's.

From Gaya, we went to Varanasi. Miss MacLeod returned to Calcutta....[2]

The day they reached Buddha Gaya (January 29) was seven years from the day Josephine MacLeod had first seen Swami Vivekananda.

As regards the reference to Vivekananda's likeness to the Buddha, Jamsetji Tata once told Sister Nivedita that when Swami Vivekananda was in Japan in 1893, "everyone who had seen him [had been] immediately struck by his resemblance to Buddha."[3]

From Varanasi (Benares), Vivekananda wrote on February 7:

My dear Joe --

> We have safely reached Benares and Mr. Okakura has already done Benares. He goes to see Sarnath (the old Buddhistic place) today and starts on his tour tomorrow.

... I am rather better than at Buddha Gaya. This house is nice and well furnished and has a good many rooms and parlours. There is a big garden all round and beautiful roses and gigantic trees. It is rather cooler here than at Gaya. There was no hitch to our friend's being admitted into the chief temple and touch the sign of Shiva and worship. The Buddhists it seems are always admitted.

With all love and welcome to Mrs. Bull and Nivedita if they have arrived and all to you. Vivekananda.[4]

Again on February 14 he wrote to her from Benares:

Dear Joe --

I received a note yesterday from Mr. Okakura. They have seen Agra on their way to Gwalior....

I hope Mrs. Bull and Nivedita are getting well rested after that tremendous journey. I am so so.

The boys all send love. Ever yours with love and blessings.

Vivekananda[5]

[1] CWSNl:259-60.
[2] Life II, pp. 622-23.
[3] Letters SN I, #l 77, p. 448.
[4] CW9:177.
[5] CW9, pp. 178-79.

A REAL LIONESS

Sister Nivedita had spent the last year and a half in England with a summer vacation at Sara Bull's home in Norway. During this period her entire future work for India had taken a new shape. Having gone to India in 1898 to serve Swami Vivekananda by working for women's education, she now looked on that as only a tiny part of the challenge and need of India to which she should address her talents and energy. In England she had met Romesh Chandra Dutt, an eminent Indian civil servant, who was now retired and living in London. He had given her much support and encouragement and had helped her in making some influential contacts[1]. He wanted her to remain in England, and wrote to Swami Vivekananda asking him to allow her to do so. On April 4, 1901, Swamiji had written giving his approval.

Nivedita had stayed in London, gradually increasing the circle of contacts with people who could help her secure greater advantages for India. She wrote articles and letters on the Tata Research Scheme[2], and also worked for Dr. Jagadish Chandra Bose, the Bengali scientist, whom Swami Vivekananda had written about with great pride in his memoirs of the Paris Expo.[3]

Sister Nivedita believed that in Dr. Bose's scientific genius India might see proof of its intellectual superiority over the West[4]. In June of 1901 she had confided to her beloved Joe about her own place in Swamiji's work, writing:

To my great horror, Freedom has meant something to me, for my life has come to include many elements that Swami would probably not have put there. They are all for him however,... I [still] belong to my work -- to the women -- and to the girls -- even as you have said. And I belong to Hinduism more than I ever did. But I see the political need so clearly too! ... and to that I must be true. I believe now that I have something to do for grown-up India and for Indian men.[5]

And in July 1901 from Norway she had written to Joe:

Oh! India! India! Who shall undo this awful doing of my nation to you? Who shall atone for *one* of the million bitter insults showered daily on the bravest and keenest, nerved and best of all your sons?

Do you think ravening wolves can be made gentle as babes?... That is what *work in England for India* means.... Swami is the only person I know who goes to the root of the matter -- national man-making.[6]

At the end of December 1901 Nivedita, Sara Bull, and Romesh Dutt left England, arriving in Madras on February 3, 1902. Nivedita's old nurse, Miss Bett, was with them. The following day Nivedita and Dutt were given a big public reception at which she gave an address which was so pro-Indian and nationalistic that the British police began keeping her under surveillance[7]. She, Sara, and Miss Bett arrived in Calcutta a few days later.

Now the trinity was back together and housed in the American Consulate. On March 7 or 8 Swami Vivekananda and his party returned to Belur Math. Within two days Kakuzo Okakura also returned from his tour, and he too began staying at the Consulate[8]. Okakura and Sister Nivedita had much to talk about, Nivedita saying that she found in his writings the very same spirit as that of Vivekananda -- "Arise! Awake[9]!" She later helped him a great deal by correcting manuscripts for two of his books, *The Ideals of the East* (for which she also wrote the preface), and *The Awakening of Asia*, in which he tried to establish the unity of all Asian countries.[10]

After Okakura's death in 1913, Joe was to write to a friend, "It was India that was the magnet that drew Mr. Okakura from his seven years' absorption in his work of establishing the Bijutsuin[11]." But in Yasuko Horioko's article on "Okakura and Swami Vivekananda's Disciples," the author points out: "The magnetic power ... that drew Okakura to India was Josephine MacLeod herself. Had it not been for her efforts, Okakura would not have accompanied her to India, and his encounter with Swami Vivekananda would never have taken

place. Had it not been for her efforts, Okakura would not have met Sister Nivedita and *The Ideals of the East* would never have been published."[12]

[1] Letters SN I, #162, #163, pp. 420-21.
[2] Sankari Prasad Basu, "Viveka nanda, Nivedita, and Tata's Research Scheme," PB, Octo ber 1978, p. 452.
[3] CW7:379-80.
[4] New Disc., 6:362.
[5] Letters SN I, #170, pp. 431-32.
[6] Ibid., #l 72, pp. 435-36.
[7] New Disc., 6:362.
[8] Life II, p. 629.
[9] Yasuko Horioko, "Okakura & Vivekananda's Disciples," p. 120.
[10] Yasuko Horioko, "Okakura & Vivekananda's Disciples.
[11] Yasuko Horioko, "Okakura & Vivekananda's Disciples, p. 119.
[12] Yasuko Horioko, "Okakura & Vivekananda's Disciples. p. 119.

LAST DAYS WITH VIVEKANANDA

In 1902 the public celebration of Sri Ramakrishna's birthday fell on March 16. Swami Vivekananda was too ill to leave his room, but after the puja, Sister Nivedita, Joe, and Sara went to see him. Swami Niranjanananda was standing guard to keep visitors away, but seeing the women, he knocked on Vivekananda's door and told him they were there. They were admitted to his room, and sat down on the floor. One male disciple of Vivekananda was there also. Seeing how ill Swamiji was, the women merely exchanged a few words with him, then quickly left. When they had gone, Vivekananda praised these Westerners for being "cultured" and not trying to hold him in conversation when he was unwell.[1]

On March 22 Joe, Sara, and Sister Nivedita visited Belur Math[2]. Then, as Nivedita had been asked to distribute prizes for some athletic events held on the Math grounds, she and Joe went again to Belur on March 29. Joe, visiting with Swami Vivekananda in his room, could look out the window and see Sister Nivedita down below. On March 29, 1907, she remembered that day and wrote about it to Nivedita:

Five years ago today I saw Swamiji for the last time. You remember, you went at His request to the Math, to distribute prizes at some athletic sports, and I stayed two hours, almost alone -- with Him ... I remember saying to Him that He was the new Buddha, who was but to appear in the Far East to be recognised and acclaimed. He used to watch me with a quizzical --half-doubting, half-believing way and NEVER said He was not.[3]

As this letter was written only five years after the fact, it seems most likely that Joe's date of this important day (March 29, 1902) is correct. Her published reminiscences speak also of having seen him for the last time in April. She writes:

I saw Swami off and on all that year [meaning, January 1901 to spring 1902]. One day in April he said, "I have nothing in the world. I haven't a penny to myself. I have given away everything that has ever been given to me." I said, "Swami, I will give you fifty dollars a month as long as you live." He thought a minute and then he said, "Can I live on that?" "Yes. Oh, yes," I said, "but perhaps you cannot have cream." I gave him then two hundred dollars, but before the four months were passed he had gone.

At Belur Math one day, while Sister Nivedita was distributing prizes for some athletics, I was standing in Swamiji's bedroom at the Math, at the window, watching, and he said to me. "I shall never see forty." I, knowing he was thirty-nine, said to him, "But Swami, Buddha did not do his great work until between forty and eighty." But he said, "I delivered my message and I must go." I asked, "Why go?" and he said, "The shadow of a big tree will not let the smaller trees grow up. I must go to make room."

Afterwards I went again to the Himalayas. I did not see Swami again.[4]

A few days after her last visit with Swamiji, Joe received as her guest at the American Consulate the Reverend Oda, the abbot of the Asakusa Temple in Tokyo, with whom she had stayed[5]. Her reminiscences state: "That summer [spring in the West] General Patterson, the American Consul General, allowed me to have the Consulate, and there I had as guest Mr. Oda, who had been my host at the Asakusa temple in Tokyo."[6] On Reverend Oda's first day in Calcutta (April 2), he and Okakura went to visit Swami Vivekananda at Belur. At that time the Reverend Oda said to Swamiji that if such a distinguished person as himself took part in the Congress of Religions to be held in Japan, it would ensure success. Japan, he said, stood in need of a religious awakening, and there was no one else who could bring it about but Vivekananda. Swami Vivekananda recognized the sincerity of the two Japanese men and knew that his going to Japan would be a service to mankind[7]. His declining health, however, forced him to decline this invitation.

On April 2 Swami Vivekananda wrote to Joe, giving detailed instructions for the journey she was about to make to Mayavati. His letter, full of practical detail, expressed loving concern for the welfare of one who was very dear to him. To make sure her trip went off without a hitch, he wrote:

My dear Joe --

The telegraph is already gone and I expect you will fill all arrangements there.
The Dak bungalows en route to Mayavati provide no food, nor have they cooks.
Provisions have to be taken at Kath Godam and arrangements made. If you find any difficulty go straight to Almora and make your arrangements at leisure. The Dak bungalows on the way to Almora provide food and in Almora there is a nice Dak bungalow.
Hoping everything will come your way as they always do (except Swamiji's health).

Yours affly,
Vivekananda

I like Mr. Oda much -- he means kinship. V.[8]

Joe probably left Calcutta on April 5, arriving at Mayavati on April 7, according to the Ashrama diary. Lala Gangi Sah accompanied her[9]. She remained there until April 20[10]. The trek to Mayavati was not easy, and even preparing for such a trip was a horrendous task as is borne out by a letter Sister Nivedita wrote to Joe on May 1, when she was making her own preparations to go to Mayavati. For her, preparing for the long journey was a logistical nightmare; and she praised Joe's efficiency, saying, "How you ever bore the weight of organizing these Indian journeys, I do not know."[11]
On April 21, as Joe began the long task of journeying out of India, Swami Vivekananda wrote to her again about Japan:

Dear Joe,

It seems the plan of going to Japan seems to have come to nought. Mrs. Bull is gone, you are going. I am not sufficiently acquainted with the Japanese....
I am getting on splendidly, they say, but yet very weak, and no water to drink. Anyhow the chemical analysis shows a great improvement. The swelling about the feet and the complaints have all disappeared.
Give my infinite love to Lady Betty and Mr. Leggett, to Alberta and Holly [Hollister Sturges] -- the baby [Frances Leggett] has my blessings from before birth and will have forever.
How did you like Mayavati? Write a line about it.

With everlasting love, Vivekananda[12]

[1] CW7:243-44.
[2] Life II, p. 630.
[3] Letters SN II, append. #57, pp. 889-90.
[4] Rems., p. 242.
[5] Life II, p. 636.
[6] Rems., p. 242.
[7]Life II, p. 636. 5
[8] CW9:182-83.
[9] Life II, p. 637.
[10] Letters SN I, #181, p. 460. 55.
[11] Ibid., #183, p. 464.
[12] CW5:179.

LAST MESSAGES

Sister Christine had arrived in Calcutta on April 7, 1902, and so she and Joe had still not met. On May 25 Sister Nivedita wrote to Joe, telling her about Christine:

If He [Swami Vivekananda] goes to Europe it is of course most desirable that He should have some refuge -- and ... about that, you will know best.... Only that if S. Sara has the home, and you are not there, I would advise [Christine's] going, as He does need that sweetness that comes only from you and her. She submits to Him completely and does anything He commands, so she does not exert your common sense and protective function. Still, she is soothing. [She] is just as staunch as a MacLeod. She is gentle and clinging and not so dominant as you -- but she is loyal and sympathetic and generous....

[*Postscript*] You speak of changing your attitude to the King -- "cutting the connection forever." What reason could there be for this? Only something that is directly or indirectly the result of illness. He never needed tenderness as he does now dear Yum. And it was never so necessary to ignore completely all his words and deeds. They mean less than nothing[1].

From subsequent events, it is clear that whatever Joe meant by "cutting the connection" also amounted to less than nothing. Her relationship with Swami Vivekananda had been established in her mind as eternal from the moment she met him. Perhaps by the word "connection" she meant painful attachment, something she must have felt urgently at this time of leaving him. His "words and deeds" might refer to his mixed attitude towards Okakura, as later letters from Sister Nivedita indicate.

Joe's reminiscences tell about her last letter to Vivekananda. She writes:

I went back to Europe for the King's [Coronation][2]. As I said, I never was a disciple, only a friend, but I remember in my last letter to him in April 1902, as I was leaving India -- I was never to see him again -- I distinctly remember writing in this good-bye letter the one sentence, "I swim or sink with you." I read that over three times and said, "Do I mean it?" And I did. And it went. And he received it, though I never had an answer. He died July 4, 1902.[3]

Actually Joe did receive one more letter from Vivekananda. Emma Calve's father had recently died, and Swamiji wrote a condolence letter to her, sending it through Joe. In a cover letter dated May 15, 1902, Vivekananda penned his last blessing to her:

Dear Joe,

> I send you the letter to Madame Calve.
> I am somewhat better, but of course far from what I expected. A great idea of quiet has come upon me. I am going to retire for good -- no more work for me. If possible, I will revert to my old days of begging.
> All blessings attend you, Joe; you have been a good angel to me.
>
> With everlasting love,
> Vivekananda[4]

When Joe returned to England that spring of 1902, she joined Betty and presumably Alberta at a house Betty was renting at 12, Bruton Street in the fashionable Mayfair district of London[5]. It had been over a year and a half since Joe had been with the family, and by this time Betty was thoroughly immersed in the lifestyle to which she had aspired all her life. Her English household was now regulated by the genteel rhythm of the Seasons: the season to be in London, the season to be in the country[6]. And all under the tutelage of her friend, Lady Maud, the famous socialite known as Emerald Cunard. Betty's way of living created a dramatic and contrasting backdrop for the devastating blow that was about to fall on Joe's life.

[1] Letters SN I, #187, pp. 468-70.

[2] The coronation of King Edward VII had been scheduled for June 26, 1902, but due to his poor health, it was postponed to August 9, 1902.[3] Rems., p. 242.[4] CW5:179-80.[5] Late and Soon, p. 165. [6] Ibid., p. 148.

DEATH IN THE GRAND MANNER

Joe's reminiscences continue:

On the second of July [1902] Sister Nivedita saw [Swami Vivekananda] for the last time. She went to inquire whether she should teach a certain science in her school. Swami answered, "Perhaps you are right, but my mind is given to other things. I am preparing for death." So she thought he was indifferent.

Then he said, "But you must have a meal." Sister Nivedita always ate with her fingers, *a la Hindu*; and after she had eaten, Swami poured water over her hands. She said, very much the disciple, "I cannot bear you to do this." He answered, "Jesus Christ washed the feet of his disciples." Sister Nivedita had it on the tip of her tongue to say, "But that was the last time they ever met." It was the last time she ever saw him.

That last day he spoke to her of me and of many people, but when he spoke of me he said, "She is pure as purity, loving as love itself." So I always took that as Swamiji's last message to me. In two days he died having said, "The spiritual impact that has come here to Belur will last fifteen hundred years -- and this will be a great university. Do not think I imagine it, I see it."

They cabled me on the fourth of July, "Swami attained nirvana." For days I was stunned. I never answered it. And then the desolation that seemed to fill my life made me weep for years....[1]

Once Joe confided to her niece Frances about the darkness of that sad day, saying: "I remember the day I heard of Swami's death. I had been to a matinee in London and as I came out of the theatre I remember looking round and thinking how grey was the world ... and that night in Bruton Street I had the cable from Belur: 'Swamiji attained Nirvana.'"[2]

And now began the flurry of telegrams and letters criss-crossing in many directions -- from people who knew how much Swami Vivekananda had meant to Joe, and to those to whom Joe would offer her own comfort. Several letters came from Sister Nivedita. On July 6 she wrote a long letter to Joe which was so delayed in transit that she later repeated much of it the following September 14. She wrote:

The last subject touched on as we sat in that back verandah last Wednesday morning was all of you -- how no man was ever so in love as Leggett -- his sterling merchant-honesty, of Lady Betty's freedom from sentimentality, and her great wisdom in choosing just what she wanted -- of you, and how you were "an extraordinary mixture of the most childlike faith (and he lingered here, as he spoke), and *an awful* suspiciousness" -- of Dr. Elmer Gates. His mind in fact was with you all, brooding over the past that was to Him the ever-present, and to be touched even by His most casual thought would have been a blessing enough.

...But your real message came at the burning pyre itself. At 2 o'clock we stood there, and as I told you in the letter that seems to have been lost, I said to Swami Saradananda seeing a certain cloth covering the bed-top -- "Is *this* going to be burnt? It is the last thing I ever saw Him wear!" Swami Saradananda offered it to me there, but I would not take it. Only I said, "If I could only cut a corner of the border off for Yum!" But I had neither knife nor scissors, and the seemliness of the act would have been doubtful -- so I did nothing. At 6 o'clock ... as if I were twitched by the sleeve, I looked down, and there, safe out of all that burning and blackness, there blew to my feet the very two or three inches I had desired out of the border of the cloth. I took it as a Letter from Him to you, from beyond the grave.[3]

Joe did receive the piece of burnt cloth from Vivekananda's pyre, and for many years she carried it in her handbag along with his most famous letter, written to her on April 18, 1900 from Alameda, California, and Sister Nivedita's original letter of July 6, 1902, in which she had written about receiving the cloth at the burning-pyre. Years later all these precious things would be taken from Joe by a gust of wind. Once she wrote about this, saying, "It is only a memory now and that is the best -- after all -- isn't it."[4] But in the summer of 1902, Joe did not yet have that kind of detachment, as letters show.

July 7: Sister Nivedita to Joe:
Please live a little while, and make your child believe and understand that your dear Friend [Okakura] is REALLY part of the whole thing [Swamiji's work], whatever Swamiji may or may not have said, and that the Freedom is really the Work. I need your beautiful burning faith so much.
This man [Okakura] that you have given us is noble through and through. Do write and comfort him. They worship him there [in Japan], as their very Guru.[5]
[The code names Nigu, Friend, and Soul in Sister's letters of this period refer to Okakura, according to Sankari Prasad Basu.][6]

July 10: Sister Nivedita to Joe:
I am getting Grindlay's to send you a telegram through Dr. Bose. I fear you are utterly unnerved. Do not be grieved, Dear -- what would have happened to us if you had not done just what you have? The service to Japan will yet be done, when Japan has first served here.
How blessed has been this end! How blessed the soul [Okakura] that you brought to him, and to the Motherland! Do not forget that you are life itself to that soul, but that it is yourself, not any third, that it must have.
You are so necessary to us all -- dearest Yum -- if the great work is to be done -- do not think we can dispense with you.[7]
July 10: Joe MacLeod to Mary Hale:
Two cablegrams from Calcutta -- "Friday evening Swamiji attained Nirvana" and "Grieve not -- all victory and benediction" -- show that our blessed one has finished His earthly career on July 4th dying on his beloved Ganges -- triumphantly -- I saw Him the end of March when He was apparently getting well --and on May 15th His last letter to me -- He said he was better but not as strong as He had hoped.
Margot was evidently with Him -- to the end -- and His last days & hours on earth will soon be known to us -- on His 40th [actually 39th] birthday, January 29, He arrived at BuddGaya -- where we stayed a week together. He always said He would die at 40. There can be no mistake -- but the anguish has come to stay. I shall be returning home on August 2nd to 269 Madison Avenue, New York.[8]
July 16: Sister Nivedita to Joe:
We cannot do without you, dear Yum -- so get well for all our sakes, and the Work's most of all. Keep our faith alive that this, and no other is for us, that there is no unfaithfulness in doing the greatest right -- and never can be. Do go for the rest-cure. Oh may it bring back life to you! The Math is absorbed these days in weeping and in worship....
People suggest that I should write a Life -- but I think time must pass first. It must be so simple and so great -- so full of the throb of India -- and yet so unmistakably the story of an Avatar. But if you will tell me that you want it, I can begin any time.
Quietly to put the body down as a worn-out garment at the end of an evening meditation! "That will be a great death that I shall die, saying 'Hara! Hara! Hara! (Siva! Siva!)'" I remember His saying long ago. And it has come true. With the laurels green -- with all things in order -- with the shield undimmed -- he went. Oh Swami, dear Swami, grant to me always to carry out your innermost will -- not merely the personal whim or weakness! I think ... that one of the marks which distinguish great discipleship from poor, must probably be always the power of interpreting the Impersonal, rather than the Personal-side even of the Masters.
All the world is worshipping but your heart is the deepest of all sanctuaries to His name -- and you are ill, and I must not tire you.[9]
With the separation from her guru came voluntary separation from the Ramakrishna Order for Sister Nivedita. Her methods of work were now so political as to be incompatible with the Ramakrishna Order's regulations which Vivekananda himself had framed. In the short time

Nivedita had been with Swamiji that spring, he had severely scolded her, to the point where she had begged him to stop, about her political attitude towards the work to be done for India. Vivekananda had made it clear that she could not be associated with both the Ramakrishna Math and the political movements of the time, and after his passing, Swami Brahmananda told her that she must make her choice.[10]

In Nivedita's letter to Joe written July 16, she asked her to ask Dora Roethlesberger to send her a message about whether she felt Nivedita was on the right path or not[11]. Two days later, July 18, Sister Nivedita formally withdrew from the Ramakrishna Order, writing a brief letter to Swami Brahmananda in which she also asked that he and other members of the Order lay her love and reverence daily at the feet of the ashes of Sri Ramakrishna and her own beloved Guru[12].

One week later, on July 25, Sister Nivedita wrote to Sara Bull, saying, "Every other relationship falls off -- and at this moment I see no one but Yum in relation to Him[13]!"

July 28: Sister Nivedita to Joe:

Your sorrowful cry came yesterday, and all night long in my dreams I was with Him -- and you. This time we knew that He was going, and it all seemed so simple, but when He had left us we sobbed -- oh so bitterly. Yes, I am His child. But I am yours too. And I feel that at this time specially I belong to you alone, with some little right to console and caress....[14]

August 7: Sister Nivedita to Joe:

Now for all the questions you ask....

1. To go just as He went is held to be *the* triumphant way -- the Sannyasi death. The whole country has thrilled to it. It was on the Dark night of Kali too, wh. means that the body is not necessarily resumed, unless He will. He had risen beyond it even while in it.

2. I think He certainly knew -- not the minute, the hour, the day. But I think on Wednesday morning He knew that I wd. never see Him again.

3. He left everything in order.... He blessed the house and the work -- and me.... Three wishes -- Japan, wh. he expressed the very day he went -- "I want to do something for Japan."[15]

Sister Nivedita also gave Joe a detailed description of Swamiji's last several days. By the time she received this very long letter, Joe was in Massena Springs, New York, where she had gone for a rest cure of several weeks. Writing from there (perhaps to Betty Leggett) Joe described the wonder and beauty of Swamiji's grand manner of passing out of the body.

I am lost in awe, [she wrote], with the description of the death of Swamiji. He was preparing for it for ten days. The last day *was* magnificent, in strength and power -- July 4th -- meditating 3 hours in the morning -- teaching the Vedas and Sanskrit grammar to his disciples 3 hours in the afternoon -- talking with old-time interest to everyone -- inquiring about the families of those who were there.... He was perfectly well and meditating again in the evening after a two mile walk towards Howrah -- then going to his room -- sending everyone away.

In about a half hour one of his young disciples -- found him in Samadhi -- and at 9 he ceased breathing -- his hair standing on end like Rama Krishna's!

Then He knew and wished it! Wished for Death the deliverer! It was of His own free will He gave up the body!

He told Margot [Nivedita] he was preparing for death on July 2nd, but she did not take it seriously. He washed her hands as "Jesus washed His disciple's feet!"[16]

Joe received a letter from Swami Saradananda in which he described in vivid detail for her the last honors paid to Swami Vivekananda by his brother monks and his disciples. He wrote:

The ceremony was simple but an impressive one. The Prophet was adorned in the Sannyasin fashion with the holy wood ashes and flowers. The [rosary] beads were in his hands and with only the loin cloth on he looked the veritable picture of Siva as you have seen in the picture of Kali the Mother! A gerua chuddar [shawl] was thrown over the body, so that nothing but the smiling, powerful and sublime face could be seen. He was carried downstairs on our shoulders and placed on a wooden bedstead all adorned with flowers. Rose water was sprinkled and flowers poured by all at his feet. [His feet were] touched reverently with our heads, and then

began the waving of the lights as you have seen in the Dakshineswar temple. This over, all cried solemnly, “Victory to Sri Ramakrishna -- Victory to the great spiritual guide (Guru)!”
Then the bed was raised gently and borne by us all with the chanting of “Victory to Sri Ramakrishna” and carried to the southern extremity of the [Belur Math] grounds, where there is a Bel tree. The pyre arranged, each one lighted a fagot torch and lighted [the pyre], going round and round the place. Nivedita formed one of the number. The pyre went on burning and the chant of victory went on as well. When finished, each brought a jug of water and poured it upon the fire. The precious relics were then picked from amongst the charcoals and placed in a brass urn which was then carried into the worship room. Then all had a bath in the Ganges and were served light refreshments and cups of tea.[17]
Betty Leggett wrote to Joe: “How wonderful! Can you imagine that last day with its full consciousness -- and no word [about it] said to living human? We know what it means to prepare with care, even solemnity for an event in life -- like marriage or any great step, and to have had his whole energy and consciousness upon the great step sounds so like him. Was he not a God -- so full knowing what has to be?”[18]
And Frank Leggett remarked about Swami Vivekananda, “His like will never be seen again by us on this earth....”[19]
Joe received a letter of consolation from young Hollister Sturges who encouraged her to try Christian Science as a remedy for her fragile condition. Her letter to him is interesting in the insights it reflects about Vivekananda, and it also reveals what might be considered her own prophecy about Sister Nivedita, whom she always referred to as Margot. On August 31, 1902, she wrote in part:
Great spiritual activities may use up the body in a few years! Swamiji was like a great dynamo charging the world with his spiritual power! It’s not the *number* of years you live, it is the *power* you put into those years! While Swamiji lived, consciously or unconsciously my life & thoughts were tied to him -- now he is gone -- I shall soon get well.
Margot, however, is left us -- and in another ten years she will be gone[20]. To help her is *still our privilege*.
Ever lovingly, Tantine[21]
The degree to which Joe was stunned cannot be measured at this time, so distant from that of 1902, when Swamiji’s great passing was fresh and her grief was new. She had never before experienced real life as she had found it in Vivekananda, and now to lose that great force that had been a constant reminder of Reality and Truth was too much to bear. She must have awakened each day only to feel all over again a great, aching loss. Nothing interested her because there was no Swamiji. The rest cure at Massena Springs was only the first step she took to recover, and at times she seems to have not wanted even that. She must have felt that if Swamiji could not breathe, how could she? Her despondence is reflected in letters written by others to her, particularly during that summer and fall.
August 3: E. T. Sturdy to Joe:
I know how you have suffered;... Everybody has to go through this gate of bitter separation and everybody learns from it what it has to teach him or her as an individual. Yet you will live to understand that it was good, just in its place -- and for you.
When Swami left [England] for India with Goodwin [in 1896], I laid my head on his breast and sobbed like a child. That was my separation from him; I learnt my lesson “in space and in time” and death can add no more.[22]
September 14: E. T. Sturdy to Joe:
I think that after a little while you are destined to grow stronger; you have been going through a great and sudden initiation during these last few years and it has had an enormous effect upon your nervous and emotional and purely physical organization. You will probably now settle down into calmness and strength and be all the more able to fulfill the work of him you love. [23]
Undated 1902 (?): Sister Christine to Joe:

They tell me that we sorrow only for ourselves and that it is all selfishness however refined it may be. Perhaps so -- yet the human cries out.
Yet while for me life is finished, for him this is Freedom Absolute. I try to think of that and that alone. And after all this life is but a little thing and short, thank God.
We would not have him back suffering in body, tortured in mind -- no, not even for one hour would we? We would rather gladly suffer the pains and bear the sense of loss.
I love to think of Him "sitting in Eternal Meditation."[24]
October 11: Swami Swarupananda to Joe:
Dear Mother, I am deeply sorry to find that you are still staggering under the blow. May the great sorrow bring you peace soon![25]
Perhaps one of the surest ways to conquer grief is to become the consoler for another who grieves. Though wounded with her own pain, Joe tried to console others through her letters and her insights. On August 23 she wrote to Charlotte Sevier at Mayavati, saying: "As you write, our beloved Swami was so broad, so loving in embracing all his disciples in their special way; & he was so strong in capacity for work; in fact it was a rest to him compared with standing still, which was a weary toil to him."[26]
She also wrote to Swami Turiyananda, and he answered her on October 16, writing:
It was with greatest satisfaction that I received your very affectionate letter the other day. It consoled me a good deal to be told that Swamiji was not disgusted with me but was satisfied with my loyalty and devotedness to his cause. It was extremely unfortunate that I could not see him again. But we must learn to bear what cannot be mended.... [The shock of hearing of his death] was too severe for me to stand. It stunned me outright and I have not been able to recover from its effects yet....
As about Swamiji I can assure you it was no death to him. He passed out as you say consciously and willingly in samadhi.... It is true he needed rest very badly and this world could never have given him that rest. It is therefore a consolation to think that he will have that rest now to prepare himself again for the task he took upon himself to perform -- the regeneration of the world.... I have been so happy to learn you have been improving.[27]
For the rest of the days of their crying together, Joe and Sister Nivedita would mainly console each other through the power of Vivekananda's words, recorded indelibly in their memories and exchanged like love tokens through their letters. On October 1 Nivedita wrote to Joe:
I love these words that you reveal to me now and then, that Swami said of me. I came out on this journey with "Margot's boldness" ringing in my heart....
The novel has gone on unfolding to you in my letters, has it not? And now your great strong words come thundering on one's track in their own divine way.... You had it always, this knowledge that the past must not define the present. *Dear Yum*, you have never "failed" in anything. You have sacrificed yourself in order to make life possible in greater ways to others.... Oh it is good to hear the words you tell from Him! "India shall ring with her [Nivedita]!" Is that the plan He is now beginning to fulfill?
But your place has been the great, the essential place. Your steps have been unerring, faultless. *Your* renunciation has been perfect and complete. Your insight has been true in the man you brought [Okakura] and the place you gave him.[28]

[1] Rems., pp. 242-43.[2] Late and Soon, p.238.[3]LettersSNI,#207,pp.504-06.[4]"A Soulful Epistle from a Devoted Heart," VK, January 1974, p. 357.
[5] Letters SN I, #192, p. 477.[6] Related to author by Swami Chetanananda on behalf of Sankari Prasad Basu, Septem ber 21, 1990.[7] Letters SN I, #193, pp. 477-78.[8] Friends Coll.[9] Letters SN I, #195, pp. 480-81.[10] NewDisc.,6,363.[11]LettersSNI,#195,p.481.[12] Letters SN I, #196, p. 482.[13] Letters SN I, #198, p. 486.[14] Letters SN I, #199, p. 487.[15] Letters SN I, #200, p. 490.[16] Ibid., append. #32, p. 532.[17] Friends Coll., October 4, 1902.[18] Late and Soon, p. 165.[19] Late and Soon, p. 166.[20] Sturges Coll.[21] Friends Coll.[22] Friends Coll.[23] Friends Coll.[24] Friends Coll.[25] Friends Coll.[26] Friends Coll.[27] Letters SN I, #209, pp. 508-09,511.

SEPARATION AND SURVIVAL (Part Two)

"[Maeterlinck said:] 'If you have been greatly influenced by anyone, prove it in your life, and not by your tears.'"

-- Reminiscences of Josephine MacLeod

Truly speaking, Josephine MacLeod spent the next year or so in a despondent condition: She had lost the one person who had meant more to her than her own life, and she was now out of touch with any sense of personal worth or goal. In Vivekananda's presence she had known what it meant to be truly alive. Now her very heart was breaking. Swamiji was gone, and there was nothing she could do about it.

In addition, Joe found that she no longer fit in so well with the social scene in which she had always managed to move with ease. Seven years of associating with Vivekananda had altered her outlook, her manner. She now found elegant London life irritating, with its liveried footmen, calling cards, drives in Hyde Park, and dinner parties where people *sat in chairs*. "Why not sit on the floor and be simple?" she suggested[1]. When she went to New York in August of 1902 it was perhaps partly to escape that whole world. After her rest cure at Massena Springs, she had various short stays at the new Leggett house at 269 Madison Avenue in New York City, but here she found that she and her brother-in-law, Francis Leggett, did not get on with each other particularly well. Once she wrote to Betty (perhaps in early 1903):

Everything is peaceful here because we initiate nothing. Anything of which [Frank] is not the prime initiator is antagonistic. It's awfully interesting. If anybody interrupts him with a word, suggests moving, walks into the room or goes out, speaks quickly, too softly or too loud -- there is only one rhythm, his. Only one right way, his.... Just the same I think he wears better than any man I know. He *does* the thing and doesn't talk about it.[2]

Alberta and Hollister Sturges were both very much adults now and were away. Alberta was in London, beginning to establish herself in society there; and Hollister, having left his employment with Frank Leggett's wholesale grocery concern, had gone to California that spring where he was to remain for several years[3]. Katherine Whitmarsh has described Hollister as "very affable and good natured; one who liked to joke a lot; not a business man like Frank but loads of fun."[4]

Asked for his side of the story, Frank Leggett might have stated that his life had become quite lonely. As his daughter, Frances, would later write, he was alone against the women of the family and their close women devotee friends (Sara Bull, Nivedita, and Dora Roethlesberger), who seemed to form a sort of *inner circle*. Once Joe said to Frances: "If you and Mother [Betty Leggett] and Alberta and I stand four-square against the world, nothing can touch us!" Joe did not understand that Frances was much like her father and that she privately felt her side of Aunt Joe's square would be always missing.[5]

Sister Nivedita, Joe's closest friend on earth, was on the other side of it, and suddenly, when Joe needed the comfort and love and support of people around her, she didn't have anyone. In typical MacLeod fashion, Joe began moving. In her reminiscences she explains:

The desolation that seemed to fill my life made me weep for years and it was only after I read Maeterlinck who said, "If you have been greatly influenced by anyone, prove it in your life, and not by your tears," that I never wept again, but went back to America and tried to follow the traces of where [Vivekananda] had lived. I went to Thousand Island Park and became the guest of Miss Dutcher to whom the cottage belonged, who gave me the same room that Swamiji had used [in 1895].[6]

Actually, it was not *years* later but rather the fall of 1902 that she visited the cottage where Swamiji had stayed at Thousand Island Park in the summer of 1895[7]. Joe also went to Eliot, Maine, where he had spent several weeks in the summer of 1894 giving classes at the Green

Acre Conferences. At Green Acre, teachers of different faiths had taught, each having his own tree to sit under with his students. Swami Vivekananda had sat beneath a Lysekloster pine, and it had been there that he first taught Westerners in the traditional Vedic fashion[8]. When Joe visited Green Acre in 1902 she uprooted three seedlings from under this great pine tree and with the help of little Frances Leggett and her nurse, transplanted them at Ridgely. The one planted by Frances took root and survives to this day. Joe called it the Prophet's Pine. Many years later Betty wrote to Joe about that pine, saying that it was "151 feet round and more than twice as high."[9]

Joe also wrote to Max Kaufman, whose father had owned a lodge at Camp Percy, asking him for his reminiscences of the time Swami Vivekananda had stayed there with Francis Leggett and his party in June of 1895.[10]

[1] Late and Soon, p. 112.[2] Late and Soon., p. 171.[3] Late and Soon., p. 172.[4] Whitmarsh, 1979.[5] Early Draft Late and Soon, pp. 33-34.[6] Rems., p. 243.[7] Letters SN I, #211, p. 514.[8] Swami Chetanananda, "Three Holy Places of America," VK, January 1988, p. 16.[9] Late and Soon, p. 243.[10] Late and Soon., p. 278.

BEGINNING THE WORK

On Sunday, October 26, 1902, Joe was present at a memorial service given for Swami Vivekananda at the Vedanta Society of New York. An account published in the *Brahmavadin* of 1902 states:

The service opened with prayers, meditation, and an address by the Swami Abhedananda, during which were read extracts from the letters of brother Swamis in India describing the wonderful passing out of the great Soul.

... [Among the speakers was] Miss MacLeod who had been with the Swami not only [in the West] but in his own country. [She] told how dear India was to his heart....[1]

Throughout her activities these days, Joe kept reaching out to others and searching for some sense of goal -- a sense of her own purpose in remaining behind after Vivekananda's death. Sister Nivedita had perhaps given her an inkling of an idea of what her own future work might include when she mentioned in a letter, written July 24, 1902, that if Joe ever felt up to it she might go through Nivedita's old letters and copy out anything of interest. "I must accumulate towards [writing] a life [of Swamiji]," she had told Joe. "There will not for long be another pen so fit."[2]

Sister Nivedita also asked her to please have all the "diaries" or accounts Nivedita had written to her copied out and sent to her. "The one I like best," wrote Nivedita, "is of my [*Golconda*] Voyage with Him. Perhaps too you wd. keep a book and in it write any saying that occurs to you or you hear. We must *collect*."[3]

And so collection had begun. Joe wrote to Helen Mead asking her to send typewritten copies of lectures which she had recorded when Swami Vivekananda was teaching in California, and to write an account of his stay with her family, including "any simple thing he said or did." In this letter to Helen, Joe expressed the kind of sincere care and love which made her such a loved person herself. It also indicates one of the aspects of Joe's own work which she would carry on the rest of her life -- sending devotees to India. In a letter of September 7, 1902, she wrote:

My heart turns to you with an inexpressible tenderness. I do not know which way my life will turn. I believe one can only do well what one *loves* to do. So I will wait till this first anguish is over before I try to make a future.

When you are free -- if you ever are -- I would willingly help you to go to India if you care to give yourself to his country. There are only two or three people whom I would ever help to go there. [India's burden is] so heavy. I would not add to it by sending anyone to them who would ever criticize *anything* they do. Poverty with us is *riches* to them -- but if one could love them with the love that brings hope and faith and strength then I should say go and I will help to send you there.[4]

She also asked Roxie Blodgett, in whose home she and Swamiji had stayed for some weeks in Los Angeles, for her reminiscences. Some parts of what Roxie Blodgett wrote for Joe have been quoted previously. Following are small sections pertaining to Joe's loss and her own:

... It would be an impertinence to measure your sorrow and loss by my own, so closely have you been associated with him....

You were constantly rendering him some apparently trifling service in the everyday homely happenings of our daily life, he in some small way requiring to be set right. That which we mother and care for in little, seemingly inconsequent ways must through the very nature of our care weave a world of tenderness around the object of our love -- until in some sad day we are robbed of the divine privilege of loving service and are left like "Rachel mourning for her children because they are not."

... And now "after life's fitful fever he sleeps well," never to be awakened to the discords and tumults of this life, or to be reclothed with an earthly body (in my belief).... Let us hope that in

some distant star, above a world of separation and pain, his gentle spirit may again lead and influence the spirits of men.[5]

The seven years that had been allotted for Joe to be with Swamiji had ended. Separation had begun. It would be some years before she really regained her balance and righted herself fully onto the path which would lead her to the realization that he had never left and that, as Betty Leggett had once commented, "Margot may have the [nun's] garb, but it's Joe that has the mission."[6] The clues to what that mission was to be lay in her own early grief-stricken cries for help and in her letters of strength and consolation written to others who grieved that summer and fall of 1902. Joe herself expressed what Swamiji had given her when she talked to Romain Rolland about it in later years. In his journal he recorded her words:

[Miss MacLeod said:] "Vivekananda was everything. Each one took from him according to his own situation. I myself took above all (and I let it be known abroad) the energy, because this has done me good and because I know that this is what does the most good. And when I said to Sister Nivedita, 'He was all energy,' she answered, 'He was all love.' But I responded, 'I never noticed it because he was with each one whatever would be the nature of each one, in a fair enough way, channeled to Perfection.'"[7]

In a similar vein, Swami Jitatmananda has written: "For Nivedita Swamiji left instructions to lead a life of renunciation, chastity, and service. For Mrs. Bull he gave a Sannyasa ideal of realizing the unity of existence. But to Joe he gave freedom -- freedom to take up his cross and find fulfillment in carrying the same."[8]

It would take some time for Joe to search out the boundaries of that freedom -- to find out just how firm was the ground beneath her now that her "rock to stand upon" was gone, and to find out the limits of her own capacity to survive. Against her was her constant battle with the body: frequent bouts of indigestion, ulcers, and fatigue, plus a very delicate frame. But on her side were deep love for Vivekananda and his work, her own vivacious and enthusiastic nature, and her ability to discern character and bring good people together. She also had her father's indomitable will and perseverance. She was practical and frugal and could get things done -- generally through others.

Joe, however, constantly undervalued herself, so she did not immediately see that she had been carrying the simple truth of Swamiji's message within her from the moment she met him and that this, held within that nomad body of hers, would in itself assure her of having a place in his work for as long as she breathed. As Swami Vivekananda had once stated, "You are the highest temple that ever was."[9]

[1] Sankari Prasad Basu and Sunil Bihari Ghosh, Vivekananda in Indian Newspapers, p. 595.
[2] Letters SN I, #197, p. 484.
[3] Ibid., #200, p. 493.[4] Friends coll.
[5] Rems., pp. 358, 361.
[6] Letters SN I, #71, p. 214.
[7] Inde, May 16, 1927, p. 203.
[8] Swami Jitatmananda, "Jose phine MacLeod -- The Radiant Vivekanandist," VK, April 1983, p. 130.
[9]CW2:320.

"OUR" CHILDREN"

In 1903 Joe's little niece Frances was now seven years old. The child's governess, Miss Looker, believed that an only child should not be raised as an only child, so Joe found a "sister" named Florence for her, through friends in Vedanta. Little Florence's own mother had died and her father was amenable to the child's being taken out, as it were, *on loan*. According to Frances Leggett herself, "The whole thing caused a mild sensation, and there were newspaper photographs of the two little girls at play with their dolls under the heading, 'A Borrowed Sister.'" Florence lived with Frances for three years, going wherever she went -- *in the world*.[1]

That first summer Joe took the two girls to Scotland where they lived near Professor Patrick Geddes and his family[2]. The following winter of 1903-04 she enrolled them in a French convent "to get their French[3]." Then she installed them in a new school near Paris. According to Frances Leggett, her Aunt Joe wrote about the school in such glowing terms to Frank Leggett that he "fell for it." Alberta's comment at the time was that the poor child had been experimented with for seven years and was pale, thin, and undernourished. Frances herself later remembered how homesick she had been at that school and that her letters home had been deceivingly cheerful. When Frank Leggett went to visit his daughter at Easter, he understood immediately and whisked her away to London.[4]

Joe and Betty simply wanted the best for "their" children. They agreed that one benefitted from becoming acquainted with all sorts and conditions of men and women; that in this way one's sympathies and outlook on life were broadened[5]. Joe and Betty much preferred European schooling because of the great cultural mix of people the children would be exposed to. Frank Leggett was more conservative and would have preferred that Frances be educated in traditional American style. The sisters, however, considered American education dull and unimaginative.

In 1905 Alberta, after much indecision, married George Montagu, son of Admiral Victor Montagu, and heir presumptive to his uncle, the Earl of Sandwich. Frank Leggett was forced to endure four Atlantic crossings for the sake of this marriage. In May 1905 he sailed to London to look over the young Montagu only to learn that Alberta had in the meantime changed her mind about marrying him. Then upon the heels of his return to New York, Frank received word that she had changed her mind back again. It meant turning right around and sailing to London for the wedding which was held on July 25. It was a huge affair taking place in Saint Paul's Knightsbridge, with the Bishop of Stepney officiating. Alberta had six bridesmaids and two junior attendants -- Frances and Florence. After their honeymoon, Alberta and George Montagu went to Ridgely, joined there in the fall by Hollister Sturges and his new bride, Jeanne Steele Sturges[6].

Alberta always remembered that when she had once asked Swami Vivekananda whether there was any happiness in marriage, he had told her: "Yes, Alberta, if marriage is entered into as a great austerity -- and everything is given up -- even principle[7]." As for Hollister, he later remembered what Swami Vivekananda had said to him about marriage when he said he would rather marry than be a monk. Swamiji had replied: "All right, my boy. Remember only that you choose the harder path."[8]

Joe was ecstatic over the beauty and solemnity of Alberta's wedding, and she wrote to Sister Nivedita: "Our wedding is still radiating its holiness over us. The day began with communion in our private chapel.... [Alberta] carried only the white ivory prayer book set with the gold and jeweled cross that Dora [Roethlesberger] gave her ... and wore Swami's mala -- with pearls* -- and a cross that George gave her."[9]

The Montagus lived at Hinchingbrook, the family home in England. They had four children: Victor, future Viscount Hinchingbrook and ultimately 10th Earl of Sandwich, (born 1906)[10]; Drogo (born 1908); Faith (born 1911); and Betty (born 1917).[11]

Hollister and Jeanne Sturges also had four children: William (born 1907); Betty (born 1908); Hollister II (born 1911); and Paul (born 1913).[12]

[1] Late and Soon, pp. 169, 192.
[2] Late and Soon., p. 174.
[3] Late and Soon., p. 177.
[4] Ibid., pp. 186-87.
[5] Friends Coll., Charlotte Sevier to Josephine MacLeod, December 27, 1903.
[6] Late and Soon, pp. 189-90.
[7] New Disc., 5:138.
[8] New Disc., 5:138.
[9] Letters SN II, append. #49, p. 776.
[10] Late and Soon, p. 192.
[11] Late and Soon. , Family Tree appendix.
[12] Late and Soon. , Family Tree appendix.

TANTINE

Alberta and Hollister Sturges had often addressed their Aunt Joe as *Tante* or *Tantine*. A study of her extant letters indicates that in August 1902 Joe began generally using the name *Tantine*[1]. *Tantine*, meaning "little aunt," was also used by Frances and Florence, and then by others in the family, and then generally by most people who knew her. Perhaps Joe herself took up that name as a sign that she was now different from the person all had known *before* (before Swami Vivekananda's passing). Perhaps it was a way of edging off and enveloping that precious memory of Swami Vivekananda's calling her *Jojo* and *Jaya* and *My Joe*. It had been *Joe* who had met Swami Vivekananda and regarded him as "The Prophet." It had been *Joe* to whom he had addressed so many beautiful letters. Perhaps she now did not care to hear any other voice saying *Joe*. Joe, the name, had a special ring to it which belonged to that wonderful period of seven years when Swamiji had still been alive. In an expansive mood, she would sometimes refer to herself as Tantine Jojo or some such combination, but from now on she was generally known as Tantine.

And Tantine, in her need to reach out to others and somehow forget her grief, became more and more a nomad. In 1904 Sister Nivedita wrote to her: "The great change that could come over my dear Yum would be if she settled down in some sweet cottage, away from cities, with a verandah, and roses, and a far outlook, and keeping a corner for the Great Memory and the Great Love [Vivekananda], let us all come and refresh ourselves at her feet by turns."[2]

[1] Sturges Coll., Josephine Mac Leod to Hollister Sturges, August 31, 1902.
[2] Letters SN II, #312, p. 684.

HER HEART IS COSMIC

Tantine had friends all over the world now, and one of them was the famous French jeweler and goldsmith, Rene Lalique. The pieces of jewelry he produced were actually small but fabulous works of art. Lalique had exhibited at the Paris Exposition in 1900, and was then deluged with many more jewelry commissions than he could fill[1]. It is a mark of Lalique's regard for Josephine MacLeod that he not only accepted a commission from her during this extremely busy period, but that he also refused payment. In 1904 Tantine began wearing a pendant which he had made for her, and which became one of her signature pieces. Shaped like a cosmic heart, worn around her neck day and night, the pendant was actually a reliquary for a sapphire. Four decades later, when her niece Frances asked her about it, Tantine replied:

My Jewel? I will tell you how I got it. Forty years ago [probably early January 1899] when I was staying in the Bombay Presidency, two young Hindus came to see me. One of them wore this sapphire on his watch chain. I said: "What a lovely colour!" He said: "Won't you take it?" I said: "Of course not." The next day he came to see me alone and offered it again, saying: "Because you love my people, will you take it?" So I took it. The following day the other young man came alone and told me his friend had given me his last possession. I never saw either of them again. Seven [more likely four] years later I met Lalique in New York and told him the story and asked him to make me a reliquary for the sapphire. He took it away and after a year sent it to me mounted as you see it and asked me to accept it as a gift -- because I loved *his* people, the French....[2]

The reliquary also contained some of the hair Joe had cut from Swami Vivekananda's head in Vienna during their tour in the fall of 1900, as mentioned in the last section of Chapter Four. She asked Maud Stumm to make a drawing of the pendant, and she sent a photo of that drawing to Sister Nivedita, who wrote to her about it on July 4, 1904, saying: "Today Miss Stumm's picture of your Reliquary has come. How wonderfully beautiful! How mystic! How still! I envy M. Lalique his power to think in symbols. But only, I do not think, if I were you, that I could wear it. I think I should make a place for it on a wall and have a *prie dieu* in front, and kneel to look at it. But after all, you are such a wandering bird, how could you? The only place with you is your own heart."[3]

Mohini Chatterji, to whom Joe also sent a photo of the drawing, gave his own interpretation of the pendant's meaning, telling Tantine: "Your artist friend has produced an epic in lines. On the crystal of truth the angels of love and work kneel and spread their protecting wings over the sapphire -- this land [India][4]." The pendant did seem to be protected, because years later when she was in India, it was stolen and recovered, then lost in the Himalayas and found a year later. (*See Chapter Six, Part Two*.)

Today a drawing of the pendant (either Maud Stumm's or a working drawing by Rene Lalique himself) hangs in Tantine's old bedroom at Ridgely Manor.

[1] Katherine Morrison McClin ton , Lalique for Collectors, (New York: Charles Scribner 's Sons , 1975), p. 1.
[2] Late and Soon, p. 243.
[3] Letters SN I, #292, p. 653.
[4] Friends Coll., undated.

NEVER FORGET WHO YOU ARE

During the first few years after Swamiji's passing, it was the beat of his words to her that went on in Tantine's memory, reminding her day and night of how much he had tried to teach her, and how much she must have meant to him. In her mind she heard his actual voice -- "the most beautiful voice [she] had ever heard -- a voice that could pierce hearers to the soul[1]." And she could see his two magnificent dark eyes as he had spoken directly to her, inscribing on her heart forever the essential truths of Vedanta. "Listen, Joe," he had told her. "Never forget who you are. Incidentally you are an American and a woman, but always you are a child of God. That's your birthright. Tell yourself that incessantly until you get the courage that comes. Know that there is this power within you as well as without." In 1943 Tantine still remembered his message of strength and quoted it verbatim.[2]

Tantine's survival after Vivekananda's passing began with her deep, profound love for him. She also loved his devotees, and it was in her sincere words of consolation and encouragement to them in those early months and years that the base of her lifelong service to him began to take shape. Prophetically it seems, Sister Nivedita wrote to her in the fall of 1905, saying: "It is one's own power to love and give that tells one of God, when days are dark. And then suddenly all veils fall, and it is the thing beloved that reveals and tells."[3]

Now and then Tantine found that she had the ability to lift others with her enthusiasm, her encouraging words, and her simple presence which carried its association with Vivekananda. People wanted to be around her because she had been so close to him. Eventually the true meaning of his words and teachings to her penetrated and she began to perceive that the deep impress which he had made on her life was a sacred trust which he had given her, assured in his own mind that she would carry it to others. "You can only give others what you have yourself," she became fond of saying[4]. And now she began to more and more consciously serve Swamiji. With her love and enthusiasm, she began to take on the role she was to live out for more than forty years, reflecting for others a little of the sparkle and vitality that had been the great Swami Vivekananda. On July 21, 1905 Sister Nivedita wrote to her:

This is very strange -- that you *do* make proselytes to His Cult -- and I, who thought I would be allowed to do that, never can. It is, however, because you love so much.

It appears that the time Swamiji left the Math not to return [until after he came back from the West] He told some that he had made a vow not to come back till He had made 10,000 people take the Name of Ramakrishna. That seems to me what you are doing now -- roaming about the world -- and making people take His name.[5]

She also once said to Tantine: "As I look back, I see that you were, of all of us, that one who was most with Him, and on equal terms, who saw Him most as He was. If I were with you, could you *talk* to me of Him?"[6]

And once Vivekananda himself had said about Joe and Sara (in 1899): "Oh, if only Mrs. Bull and Miss MacLeod would just come back and live in India men would be inspired!"[7]

For the rest of her life, though she would not be the worker in the technical sense, Tantine showed that she had a most amazing ability to get things done and to see that they were done in the swami's name and for his beloved India. In this way she survived separation from Swami Vivekananda.

[1] Inde, June 1927, p. 212.
[2] MacLecid recording.
[3] Letters SN II, #375, p. 762.
[4] MacLeod recording.
[5] Letters SN II, #358, p. 745.
[6] Ibid., #380, p. 769.
[7] Letters SN I, *35, p. 109.

GREAT STRONG WORDS

Two different people can give advice, and the advice given by one will be ignored while the very same advice given by the other will act as a catalyst. The latter was the case with advice given by Tantine. There was something about her simple, direct, and sincere words that made one a believer. Swami Turiyananda wrote a grateful letter to Tantine in January of 1903, showing how inspiring and powerful her advice could be. "Your suggestion," he wrote, "as to my going to work has been an inspiration to me. I used to feel so much worried about it. But your advice: 'Do not hurry about beginning your work. Plans need you -- you do not need plans' -- settled me.... Your letters are so invigorating."[1]

And Alasinga Perumal, Vivekananda's well-known Madrasi disciple, wrote the following in a letter which may have been addressed to Josephine MacLeod: "What you say regarding our beloved Prophet chokes up my throat and reminds me of a heart that beats synchronously with mine thousands of miles away.... As a dear sister loving a common father the impression you have left in mind is indelible and can never be effaced[2]."

Tantine's words to Sister Nivedita, reminding her or telling her of something Vivekananda had once said about his famous disciple also helped to keep Nivedita going. Her political tendencies had taken her in a direction that had not been expected by Tantine or others; and during the last years of Nivedita's life, one sees in her correspondence over and over again the question mark in her own mind as to whether or not she was pleasing her guru. Reading between the lines also gives some idea of the lay of the land in Tantine's own mind about what Nivedita was or was not doing. On November 25, 1903, Nivedita wrote to her: "Is it true that you saw Swamiji blessing me and the things I do? You could not tell me that too often[3]." And on September 8, 1904, she wrote: "I love those letters in which you tell me some word of His that I never heard before. This time it is, that He had spent years of effort in training me, such as He had spent on no other. Things like that make one trustful of oneself."[4]

Tantine also sent regular supplies to Nivedita and Christine for their personal needs and the school. She sent clothing, practical household items, and money. Sara Bull also sent money, but somehow, in Nivedita's view, there was a difference in her way of giving. Nivedita felt free with Tantine and could express her needs to her. Thanks to what Nivedita called Tantine's Canny Scotness, she knew when to give herself and when to look for others to give to a fit cause. "To go to Sara for help is simply to ask for money -- a thing impossible. To go to you, is to make the need known," she wrote.[5]

In 1907 Tantine, knowing that Sister Nivedita was having health problems, began encouraging her to come to the West. Finally an opportunity arose when Dr. J. C. Bose planned a trip to Europe and America for a long lecture tour. Nivedita travelled with him and his wife, Abala, leaving India August 15, 1907. It was to be two years before she returned. In that period she would go to England, Germany, France, and the United States. In Paris, in the late fall of 1907, she saw Betty Leggett and Joe for the first time since Swamiji's passing; and they spent long hours reminiscing about their happy days with him[6]. Again she saw them at Ridgely in New York in October of 1908, and she also spent several weeks with Sara Bull in Cambridge[7]. In May and June of 1909 Joe, the Boses, and Nivedita all met in Wiesbaden, where they had a glorious two and a half weeks together. By this time, Nivedita had Swamiji's letters ready for publication and asked Joe to go through them and make any corrections she saw necessary.[8]

Then Sister Nivedita returned to Calcutta, arriving there on July 18, 1909. Aboard ship she wrote her annual July 4 letter to Tantine, saying: "We are not departed from Him -- for He lost nothing in putting off the garment of the body.... Seven years [since his passing] has a sound, as if some phase of maturity should be entered on by then! And for you, I do not doubt that it will be so for you have indeed given your whole life to the trimming of the lamp. May it shine ever, in the window where you have set it, to the end of time!"[9]

[1] Friends Coll.
[2] Friends Coll.., March 23, 1904.
[3] Letters SN II, #257, p. 590.
[4] Letters SN II., #307, p. 677.
[5] Letters SN II., #450, p. 857.
[6] SNRV, pp. 212-21 passim.
[7] Letters SN II, #508, p. 919.
[8] Letters SN II.,# 560, p. 970.
[9] Letters SN II., #573, pp. 981-82.

FRANCIS AND FRANCES

On August 29, 1909, Francis Leggett died quite suddenly. Returning to New York City from Ridgely, he stepped onto the deck of a ferry boat, fainted, and died shortly afterward in an ambulance.[1] His daughter Frances, who was twelve years old at the time, later recalled that she and Tantine had been in England, travelling by train to visit Lady Isabel Margesson, when they received the news. She later wrote about her own reaction to her father's death: "Without any shame she sat there with all the people in the carriage looking at her, the tears pouring down her face. And for once she didn't mind their seeing. She cried all the way to London as if her heart would break."[2]

Sister Nivedita, learning of Frank Leggett's death, wrote to Tantine:
Dear Ridgely! Dear Mr. Leggett! Swamiji's host and home! That chapter is turned over and gone! France will always have a beautiful memory of her father! With what tenderness and idealism the years will cover the thought of him!... And it was so much better that France was a girl! She will do far more for her father's name and memory, as a woman, than she could have done as a man -- though once upon a time it might not have seemed so! Dear dear Mr. Leggett! How hospitable he was -- and so affectionately kind! And he DID love Swamiji -- Yum dear -- with a great great love and that will not fail. He will be His -- through life after life. You brought him into that! And how faithfully Lady Betty cemented and added to every great thing in his life![3]
Later the main thing Frances Leggett recalled was that no one showed any real emotion over her father's passing. There was simply the business of death to be gotten through: clothes dyed black to be worn for a year, and his things to be gone through and somehow disposed of or distributed.[4]
For the last few years Betty and Frances had been away from New York so much that Frank had lived a bachelor's sort of existence, staying alone in an apartment at the Touraine in New York City most of the time. Frances Leggett later recorded in *Late and Soon* that the winter of 1906-07 had been particularly happy for her because she and her mother had lived in the apartment just below her father's.[5]
To complicate things, Francis Leggett had died without leaving a *signed* will. By New York state law this meant that one-third of his estate went to Betty and the remainder to Frances. According to Frances, her mother took this as a great blow. Fortunately Tantine was there. In Frances Leggett's words:
... Joe as usual rose to the occasion. "Now you have your *chance*," she enjoined her sister. "See what you can make of it!" Valiantly she stood between Betty and the terror of disillusion. Strenuously in the next dreadful weeks she directed her thoughts toward a roseate future. Forever telling herself and others to live untrammelled by time and circumstance, she bade Betty regard the world as her footstool and spread her wings wide in the universe. Joe's eclectic aspirations were far from Betty's ideas of the good life, but still her sister's presence and admonitions helped to raise her spirits.[6]
Had Frank Leggett been alive, he probably would not have permitted his daughter's going abroad again to school, but the matter was no longer up to him, and Betty was willing to let Tantine make such decisions for the next few years. Tantine had already dismissed Miss Looker two years earlier because she did not speak French.[7] Tantine's present idea was to put Frances somewhere until her eighteenth birthday -- "Somewhere where she will learn and grow and be prepared for her responsibilities."[8] So France, as she liked to be called, was sent to England to live in Lady Isabel Margesson's household for two years, where she would study with a private tutor: Irene Tasker, a graduate of Cambridge University. Arthur Geddes and Larry Hellyer (sons of Tantine's friends) were also roped in to share the lessons, and for about five months or so, Katherine Whitmarsh also joined them.[9]

Frances Leggett later admitted that it was the best education she ever had. She also loved the Margesson family and felt like one of them immediately. In her words, it was the turning point of her life, setting up the whole pattern of her future. Her marriage, children, English background -- all that followed stemmed from her years at Lady Isabel Margesson's. But even more important, France was so thoroughly absorbed into the Margesson family that, as she later wrote, she "forgot everything that had gone before -- and this her Aunt Joe could not have foreseen."[10]

As for Ridgely, when France came of age, she gave it to her mother. Betty Leggett, who, according to France, "felt all dressed up with no place to go there," seldom used Ridgely and wrote a new will leaving it to Frances. Hollister Sturges who did use it during summers with his family, could not afford the upkeep on it, so it was put on the market. No one bought it. When Frances Leggett married, her husband did not care for Ridgely, so they spent little time there.[11] Tantine also did not stay long when she went. She preferred the city where there were lots of people around. In fact, she used to say: "When I get depressed, I just put on my hat and coat and go out and find a big crowd and just stand in the middle of it. In no time my mind feels refreshed and I'm my old self again."[12] There were no crowds at Ridgely. As Tantine once explained, "I don't care to go to Ridgely and talk to the cows and the chickens."[13] Ridgely was very still, as Frances Leggett wrote:

It was always the problem. So far from anywhere, nothing to do, no sport, no people. Only its beauty to commend it, and its peace. Everyone loved to come, no one stayed. You had to live in it to bear its stillness, you had to fill its lovely emptiness with life.... To be at Ridgely was to make the best of things.... The summers were long and they were hot at Ridgely.[14]

So no one stayed permanently at Ridgely until Frances herself returned there in 1942, resuming her maiden name of Leggett. And it was at Ridgely that she completed *Late and Soon: The Transatlantic Story of a Marriage*, which she had begun writing in England. She died in 1977 leaving Ridgely to her son, Viscount Margesson. He and his wife, Helena, have lived at Ridgely since 1964, raising their four children there.

On September 25, 1997, Ridgely became the property of Vivekananda Retreat, Ridgely, a non-profit organization whose spiritual allegiance is to the Ramakrishna Order of India. Ridgely Manor, the Casino, the Stables, and eighty-three acres were purchased in order to establish a spiritual center for retreat and study. Because of Swami Vivekananda's three stays at Ridgely, and because of his close association with Josephine MacLeod and the Leggett family, the property was considered ideal for this purpose.

[1] Late and Soon, p. 223.
[2] Late and Soon., p. 222.
[3] Letters SN II, #602, p. 1011.
[4] Late and Soon, pp. 221-22.
[5] Late and Soon., p. 199.
[6] Late and Soon., pp. 226-27.
[7] Friends Coll., Josephine Mac Leod to Frances Leggett, 1941.
[8] Late and Soon, pp. 285-87.
[9] Late and Soon, p. 287; Whitmarsh, 1986.
[10] Late and Soon, p. 287.
[11] Late and Soon, pp. 246-47.
[12] Whitmarsh, 1983.
[13] Early Draft Late and Soon, p. 3.
[14] Late and Soon, pp. 246-47.

SOCIETY GROWING PAINS

In the meantime, work at the Vedanta Society of New York had been carried on steadily over the years by Swami Abhedananda, and whenever she was in New York City, Tantine attended its services. In 1906 Swami Parama-nanda had been sent from India to assist Swami Abhedananda. Tantine very much liked this young swami who was a disciple of Swami Vivekananda, and she wrote about him in March of that year: "I like [Swami Abhedananda] for what he is doing, not for what he lacks, and the new swami will carry the love and warmth to give life to it all[1]." She spent several hours with him one day that same month, and later wrote to Sara Bull: "[Swami Paramananda] is the youngest of Swamiji's disciples and *full* of Swamiji. The beauty, love and character of our Beloved.... My heart is full of the joy of Swamiji. This fine young child -- fearless -- sweet -- strong[2]." One month later Swami Paramananda visited Sara, and she encouraged him to establish a center of work in Boston.[3]
In 1907 Swami Bodhananda was also sent from India to assist in the New York work. However, since Swami Abhedananda actually spent a great deal of time in Europe over the next three years, the work was left in the hands of the two junior swamis. Swami Paramananda also spent quite a bit of time elsewhere (in Boston, for example), so the Society work lost some of its momentum and financial support.[4]
That same year a group of the New York members expressed their desire that Swami Paramananda head the Society. Swami Abhedananda even offered to resign. On June 6, 1907, Tantine wrote to Swami Saradananda expressing her opinion of the New York situation and of Swami Bodhananda. It is a mark of the trust and confidence Swami Saradananda had in Tantine that he wrote his and Swami Brahmananda's own feelings about the matter, as reflected in excerpts from his answer to her, given below. It is noteworthy that when he wrote to her, he had not yet expressed any viewpoint on it to the New York swamis. Addressing her as My Dear JoJo and signing it with his nickname, II, meaning Swami Number Two, he wrote:
We have great faith [in] Bodhananda -- but we cannot say that with equal certainty [about] Paramananda. He is still quite young and has not been tried as yet. I do not like his showing so much temper to the Swami Abhedananda, and it seems to me that both of them [the assistants] are ignoring what is really due to Swami Abhedananda, in their wild and young enthusiasm. The Swami Abhedananda has the habit of thinking himself Swamiji's equal from the very beginning and yet Swamiji called him to the work, knowing well his faults and merits. They forget too that Swamiji will remain Swamiji, in spite of everything and everybody and none will be able to hide the sun by closing one's own eyes. However, we have not written them anything by which they might think that we too hold the same opinion of Swami Abhedananda, but just waiting to see what shape things take by all these disputes. Again, none will be more glad if any of these young monks prove themselves to be what you think of them.
... The Holy Mother is in her native village and has desired to send her love and blessings to you. So Jaya is remembered not only by the Holy Mother but by every one of the ladies who met her in India -- for they ask sometimes, "will she not come again?"...
Yours affectionately, No. II[5]
Finally, by a vote of the New York Society members, Swami Abhedananda was retained as head of the center. In 1908 Swami Paramananda moved to Boston at Sara Bull's invitation and tried to establish a new center, and Swami Abhedananda continued to make frequent trips to Europe. In 1910 the Ramakrishna Order dropped Swami Abheda-nanda from its rolls, and he continued to teach Vedanta as an independent agent. Swami Paramananda was now offered the role as head of the center, but he refused it. The Society simply lay dormant for two years until Swami Bodhananda was delegated by the Order to take up the work again.[6]
Over the years, Swami Paramananda visited Tantine at either Ridgely or Stratford-on-Avon in England, spending some days at a time with her and the family. At Stratford the swami was introduced to influential Englishmen, and Tantine later reported to him the great impression he had made. In a letter she stated:

In any case the East and the West met once -- as equals. Mr. Cramb wrote to me of his indebtedness in meeting you: “So much simplicity of nature, so much nobility and utter clearness of sentiment, and withal so entire a detachment ... as compels one to reconsider one’s judgements upon the race or nation which can produce such a character....”[7]

[1] Sara Ann Levinsky, A Bridge of Dreams, p. 93.
[2] Sara Ann Levinsky, A Bridge of Dreams, p. 90.
[3] Sara Ann Levinsky, A Bridge of Dreams, p. 91.
[4] Carl T. Jackson, Vedanta for the West, pp. 54-55.
[5] Letters SN II, append. #61, pp. 892-93.
[6] Carl T. Jackson, Vedanta for the West, p. 109.
[7] Sara Ann Levinsky, A Bridge of Dreams, p. 169.

WIELDING THE KINGDOM

In the spring of 1903 Sister Nivedita had written to Tantine: "God grant me to speak brave true words in His Name before I die -- that I may see that last confidence shining in His face once more... [Do] not tell anyone these things -- for my love rests under the shadow of yours -- but I could not say that to any other -- no matter how much they loved him."[1]

She had already begun writing a book on her days with Swami Vivekananda, and was culling entries from her own private diary and travel journals for possible use. Over the next several years Nivedita wrote to Tantine a number of times, asking her, reminding her, and then begging her to please copy out letters she had received from Nivedita. Many of these were later extremely useful in preparing the manuscript of *The Master as I Saw Him*, with some sections used verbatim. Her letters to Tantine, written in full frankness and out of love for her dear friend, had penned in vivid, loving, and colorful detail many of her conversations with Swami Vivekananda (for she had known "Yum" would appreciate knowing every wink, sniff, and nod that might reveal his well-being and his mood). *The Master*, as it was finally published in early 1910, is more than a reminiscence of Swami Vivekananda; it is a statement by him for humanity for all time. Canon Cheyne wrote in the Hibbert Journal: "This book may be placed among the choicest religious classics, on the same shelf with *The Confessions of St. Augustine* and Savatier's *Life of St. Francis*...."[2]

As close as Tantine and Nivedita were, they were very different in nature. The contrast between the two shows up most clearly in the years between the death of Swami Vivekananda in 1902 and that of Nivedita in 1911. During these nine years Nivedita's projected view of herself in his eyes seems to have been constantly weighed and found wanting by her. Over and over in her letters to Tantine, there are references which show that she constantly compared what she saw as Swamiji's original idea of her work with what that work had become in reality. In her references to Sister Christine, one reads in Nivedita's letters of 1902 glowing admiration for the other woman. But by late 1903 one finds her making gloomy admissions that it is Christine, not she, who is fulfilling Vivekananda's dreams for women's education in India. Eighteen months after Christine's spring 1902 arrival at Bosepara Lane, Sister Nivedita wrote to Tantine: "I never knew how fretted and feverish and ineffective was my life until I saw Christine's. All the things that Swamiji dreamt for me *she* is fulfilling.... She has never been burnt up with the fiery longing to be and do the right things here, as I have.... Yet I, who have been, fail to do it and be it, and she, who has not, IS the ideal itself."[3]

And one year later, on November 6, 1904, she was forced to admit that she simply *could not be* anything other than head of the girls school. She had to be the provider for others. "I could leave it all and go to a hut with my writing-desk and one servant. But I could not accept my place from those [meaning Sister Christine] who then would be in a position to give it to me. Do you understand[4]?" All this she could say to Tantine because as Nivedita once wrote, there was never any condemnation or refusal in her blue eyes.[5]

However, Sister Nivedita never underestimated the differences between herself and Tantine, who had unreserved love for so many and who had taught Nivedita about love. On April 28, 1910, Nivedita wrote to her friend from a state of low self-esteem:

... I have just been lost in a dream of all I owe to you, how you taught me step by step to love Swami, and be constantly true to that love, in every little thing as well as big.... Your life has been full of loving and being loved, and surrendering yourself to drift on the great current, and I have only twice in my life been *thoroughly* approved of, even now, and both times in India!... You were born to love, and I, I suppose, was it to work? No, I think I was born just simply to blunder!... I seem to be failing pretty badly, in a great many ways -- more ways than I could ever tell you. I should be quite content if I could come out true to Swami in some one thing -- never mind mukti [liberation].[6]

She then mentioned that Sister Christine (who was at this time in the West and had finally met Tantine) had "completed Yum's circle," adding, "No one could ever have filled *your* place."

She then referred to a very remarkable statement Swami Vivekananda once made about Joe, writing:

I have been realizing ... what a rest it was to Swami, and what He really meant by saying that you did not grow under Him. It is true. There is an unchanging quality about you that makes you such a security. One doesn't need to think of your reaction against things.... You don't *imitate*. You don't reflect. You don't emulate. Oh, it is such a rest! Fancy even Swamiji feeling this! This is absolutely what He meant when he said your charm was that you were complete before you came to Him. Oh dear Yum, but after all, your real charm is your great generous heart that can forgive everything and give freedom to everything, and leave yourself out![7]

Sister Nivedita did not, however, always have sweet words for Tantine. They were too different to be in constant harmony, and Nivedita's own feeling of being needed for great things necessarily required that she protect her position. First and foremost, she would never compromise her ideals for India nor hide her feelings towards anyone who even hinted at jeopardizing a movement towards freedom for her adopted motherland. The major difference between the two women was diplomacy.

Tantine, as Vivekananda had said of her, "could wield a kingdom." And to wield a kingdom, one must know when to speak out and when to maintain silence. Tantine had high standards and would never compromise with truth, and she loved India and wanted the best for it. She also loved people, holding them dear, so love was at the basis of her diplomacy. One pictures her being quite careful about the extent to which she let all her views be known to others. She had friends everywhere, and many of them were bound not to be in full sympathy with her perspective when it came to India and Britain's ruling position there. She seems to have put a high value on never hurting others' feelings -- wrong though she may have felt their views to be, and keeping a stiff (and closed) upper lip when she had to. In the face of what she considered ignorance or bigotry, she knew how to quietly strangle any urge to retort harshly and was a master at masking her own hurt feelings. She also had her ways of indirectly bringing others round to a new viewpoint. In this respect, Tantine was pragmatic but truthful, gentle and wise. Nivedita simply could not keep quiet. She was what she was, and she gave her message straight -- as had Vivekananda. Once Tantine characterized their two different approaches, writing to Nivedita: "... My method of doing things [is] lack of friction -- diplomacy, while you have Swamiji's methods -- no yielding -- no diplomacy -- no line of least resistance...."[8]

Sister Nivedita made a few enemies, to be sure. She didn't care. On July 28, 1910, she mentioned in a letter to Tantine that Tantine's friend Cornelia Sorabji was a "secret service scout" for England, and her (Nivedita's) most powerful enemy. Nivedita had resolutely refused to know the woman[9]. Apparently Tantine was not convinced about Cornelia Sorabji's motives and wrote back right away with a return volley about diplomacy and tact and hurting people who could perhaps help Vivekananda's work. Nivedita then rebutted Tantine's rebuttal and laid on the line her own position on diplomacy. On August 25, 1910 she wrote:

It's only you and your good opinion that has power over me. And I was grateful for anything that saved that. Strangers may say and feel anything they like about me. I am absolutely indifferent. It's all very well for you. In your freedom, you can afford to cultivate this social sweetness. But in my battle for life, if I had looked at it your way, I should have been lost.... Both types have their uses, and the constant fear of hurting that is to prevent your clearly defining your own position and idea is not the virtue in one that it may be in another.... You love everyone perhaps -- but there are many whom I very frankly loathe and despise. Nor shall I ever think it a virtue to try to conceal this. Nor are people of that type so sensitive as you think....

...In spite of all the effort spent trying to hurt no one, even you don't quite succeed -- if that matters! Even you hurt sometimes! Of course you leave a greater aggregate of sweetness behind you than most people. But you spend much in doing so. I make that expenditure on something else.... Our lives are going to be so short -- and when they are over others will see

in them a long constancy -- neither waxing nor waning -- and to that, the vision of the future, we in the present can be true![10]

[1] Letters SN II, #241, p. 565.
[2] Letters SN II, append. #73, p. 1247.
[3] Letters SN II, #257, pp. 589-90.
[4] Letters SN II, #315, p. 692.
[5] Letters SN II, #332, p. 720.
[6] Letters SN II , #675, p. 1094.
[7] Letters SN II #675, p. 1094.
[8] Friends Coll., December 15, 1899.
[9] Letters SN II, #693, p. 1121.
[10] Letters SN II, #703, p. 1137.

GREAT PASSINGS

The year 1911 was a sad year of personal losses for Tantine and Sister Nivedita. On January 18 Sara Bull died after months of suffering. Sister Nivedita had come to the West the previous November just to be at her bedside, and she was with Sara that last morning, chanting "Hari Om! Ramakrishna! Peace!" "I know she went into the presence of Swamiji -- straight," Nivedita wrote to Tantine.[1]

After Sara Bull's death, her daughter, Olea Bull Vaughan, declared her intention to contest her mother's will, which included provisions for Sister Nivedita[2]. For the next several months, Nivedita did not know if she would be financially able to keep her school running without the help Sara had been giving her up to now[3]. On her way back to India, following Sara Bull's passing, Nivedita stopped in Paris to see Tantine, and while there they received news of the death of Swami Sadananda, Swami Vivekananda's very first disciple. Both women had been very close to him, he being the one who had once remarked, "Swamiji and YoYo [JoJo] march shoulder to shoulder."[4]

In July came the deaths of Swami Vivekananda's mother and his grandmother, and also Gopaler-ma, the old devotee of Sri Ramakrishna who had lived with Sister Nivedita for some time. It had been she who had first been friendly and welcoming to the little trinity of women that long-ago spring of 1898 when they had all first come to India.

Also, quite unexpectedly came news of the death of Sara's daughter, Olea Bull Vaughan. Then in August, Rama-krishnananda died in Calcutta after a long, serious illness, and Nivedita wrote to Tantine: "What peace! There was no sign of struggle on that wonderful face, so full of strength, when I went to take my leave -- at 1/2 past 3.... A perfect life. And Ended! Ah, *that is triumph!"*[5]

[1] Letters SN II, #732, p. 1182.
[2] SNRV, p. 284.
[3] Letters SN II, #766, p. 1223.
[4] Letters SN I, #35, p. 109.
[5] Letters SN II, #767, p. 1224.

PRECIOUS CHILD

The previous spring Sister Christine had returned to Calcutta from the West. Nivedita, facing financial problems, had decided to close her school for six months during the summer heat, and both women had gone to Mayavati. There, Christine had informed Nivedita that she would be remaining at Mayavati until October and that what she would do after that was uncertain[1]. It was probably in the summer that Nivedita heard from Sara Bull's brother, Joseph G. Thorp, that funds provided by Sara Bull's will for Nivedita's school *would be forthcoming*, but that owing to Olea Bull Vaughan's death, payments would be delayed for some time.[2]

Then in late August Christine informed Nivedita that she would definitely not be returning to her school but would be taking a new position as head of the Brahmo lower school for girls[3]. There she would train teachers and earn some money. Christine's leaving would mean a very real hardship in re-opening Nivedita's Girls' School in the fall.

In spite of this great blow, Nivedita wrote to Tantine on August 31, 1911, saying: "... I am delighted at [Christine's] decision. I feel sure that through it she will gain the breadth and experience and independence that I felt she much needed."[4]

Then Sudhira Devi, who had taught at Nivedita's school, also informed Nivedita that she too would be leaving in order to teach at the Brahmo lower school for girls. Nivedita went to Sudhira Devi's home and begged her to reconsider, but Sudhira's mind was made up.[5] Nivedita had depended too heavily on Christine and Sudhira for the actual running of the school so that she could concentrate on her writing. Without them, she could not carry on. Funds from Sara Bull's estate still had not been received. The school would have to close permanently.

Now, knowing the school must shut down, Nivedita simply headed towards her own departure. She had known it was coming; the English astrologer Cheiro had predicted it in Paris the fall of 1900[7]. There are several indications in letters she wrote in 1911 that she felt death was near. She was also exhausted by the Calcutta heat and by the realization that the single task Vivekananda had actually entrusted her with -- that of establishing a permanent and viable center for the education of Hindu women -- seemed an utter failure[7].

Sister Nivedita left Bosepara Lane for the last time in late September, 1911, travelling with her good friends, Dr. Jagadish Bose and his wife, Abala, to Darjeeling for the Durga Puja vacation. A few days after their arrival there, Nivedita took ill with blood dysentery, and on October 7 prepared her will, leaving full control of the girls school to Christine.[8]

On October 10 Dr. Bose wrote to Tantine about Nivedita's condition, but by the time Tantine received that letter a cable had already arrived informing her of Nivedita's death on October 13. Before she died Nivedita had told Abala Bose, "The frail boat is sinking but I shall yet see the sunrise[9]." In two weeks she would have been forty-four years old.

Tantine wrote about Nivedita's death in two letters: "Precious child: she fought bravely and was killed literally, but not as she expected to be -- the boomerangs we send out come back to us. When will we ever learn that love alone can heal and help[10]!" "She was writing with frenzy [Dr. Bose's] works, because she thought he would not live long, and she wanted India's message of science to be finished. A great world force she has been! -- and is. God bless her and all who fight for right and justice and truth."[11]

Tantine would always have the knowledge that she had given her all to Swamiji and his beloved disciple Nivedita -- the dedicated one. She was the one whom he had spent the most time training; the one Tantine had seen, after his death, being blessed by him; the one who had yoked together the little trinity of Western women and bonded them through years of beautiful memories stored in letters and diaries, making them all a memorable part of some of the most inspiring literature ever written on the dynamic Vivekananda.

It is undoubtedly true that Nivedita had not always done the expected, nor listened to well-intentioned warnings from others, including Tantine. But what she had done for Swami Vivekananda, for India, and for devotees the world over is beyond measure.

While Tantine concentrated on making others believe in themselves, Sister Nivedita had focused her broader, more visionary energies on making India believe in herself. Swami Vivekananda, calling for man-making religion, had tried to rouse Indians from their stupor. In Nivedita's last letter to Tantine, written September 13, 1911, she talked about Vivekananda and Dr. J. C. Bose and their vast importance to India, saying: "All other great men here have been great by their service to India herself. They work within a more limited circle. But in Religion Vivekananda and in Science Bose, have made offerings to the *World*.... Oh do keep warm and true and splendid about all the dear ones! India needs loving and pushing forward, far more in these lonely days than ever before."[12]

[1] Letters SN II, #755, p. 1206.
[2] Friends Coll., Joseph G. Thorp to Josephine Macleod, No vember 24, 1911.
[3] Letters SN II, #769, p. 1227; #770, p. 1228.
[4] Letters SN II, #770, p. 1228.
[5] SNRV, p. 289.
[6] Letters SN I, #147, p. 386.
[7] Longjourney, p. 225.
[8] Letters SN II, append. #79, p. 1253.
[9] Letters SN II., append. #78, p. 1252.
[10] Letters SN II, append. #80. p. 1254.
[11] Friends Coll., Josephine Mac leod to Alberta Montagu, October 21, 1911.
[12] Letters SN II, #776, pp. 1236- 37.

MESSAGE AND MISSION (WITHOUT REGRETS) (Part One)

"If you love India enough, she will solve her own problems."

--Swami Vivekananda to Josephine MacLeod

When Josephine MacLeod met Swami Vivekananda in January 1895, she had just turned thirty-six years old (her birthday being December 26). Now in January 1912 she had just turned fifty-three. People of middle-age tend to look back over their lives, re-examining the paths they have taken, sometimes regretting major life choices. They also tend to look ahead towards retirement, either idealizing or dreading the future without work. Tantine had next to nothing to regret about her past, for life had been good to her. She had seen and immediately recognized Swamiji, and upon that fact the rest of her life was based. Writing once to Mary Hale, Tantine said:

I don't believe there can be much of a mistake in any of our lives, in the lives of us who recognized Him! As long as we keep that shrine -- nothing else matters really.... Your present life is but a phase, a preparation for the end! And with maturity there comes such freedom of action! I can do almost anything now, with my frame of grey hair. In the first place one is not noticed so much.... Then one's life and character have gained one friends, people who believe in one.[1]

Tantine also did not look towards the future. She lived by the words she had penned to Swami Turiyananda after Vivekananda's passing: "Plans need you -- you do not need plans[2]." Tantine in 1912 was poised on the horizon of almost four more decades of life. All of it lay open to her, but if she thought of the future at all, it was surely only in terms of what might be done for India and for Vivekananda's message. In that same letter to Mary Hale, she did state that she meant "to be on earth for many a year yet," then added: "Did I ever tell you that when I once asked Swamiji what I could do for him, he said, 'Do something for India.' And when I asked what I could do, he said, 'Love her -- if you love India enough she will solve her own problems.'"[3]

Tantine tended to think in terms of *What can be done today?* And she felt fresh and vigorous and alive, and had no idea of retirement. What would retirement mean for a person like her? She lived in the present, with the eager, inquisitive nature of a beginner -- a child. For to Tantine, she was not actually fifty-three years old: She counted her age only from the date she had met Vivekananda[4], the day she had found her own soul. To another friend she wrote, "I, who plan nothing -- just live from day to day, hour to hour -- wonder what the Lord has up His sleeve next for His Joya."[5]

This planlessness of Tantine's was a characteristic she shared with Swamiji, who had said, "Religion is not for planners." Once she wrote to a friend: "I *love* sudden things, no preparation -- pre-occupation, just sudden!... We are so curious! At least I am and that is what helps keep me busily guessing what I'll do next!"[6]

Vivekananda also learned something new everyday -- a fact Tantine often repeated, especially to young monastics she met. She would say: "It was because Swamiji was new and fresh everyday that he held one! So if we learn everyday, as he did, we will not grow old or stale or flat!"[7]

Because she loved to learn, she did a lot of listening, which made others feel free to talk when they were with her. "Tell me about yourself," she would say, and she would really listen to that person. Now and then she would step in and encourage a person to cultivate a particular trait, or she would point out how blessed they were to have a certain quality. That person would leave Tantine feeling great, having learned something new about herself or himself[8]. Katherine Whitmarsh said about Tantine: "She was a brilliant conversationalist and an equally brilliant listener. She would talk about Vedanta -- but without calling it that. Once she was sitting next to a man who, knowing her connection with Vedanta, apologized, saying, 'I'm sorry, but I know nothing about philosophy.' Tantine said to him: 'Tell me! How did you

become so successful in your work?' And then she listened with sincere interest while he told his story."[9]
Lillias Laware, housekeeper for many years at Ridgely Manor, once told Frances Leggett: "Miss MacLeod is a wonderful person. I could talk to her forever. She always does me good. She always gives me courage."[10]
"Recognition of the good, I find everywhere, including the Best occasionally," Tantine once said. "When I see what others put up with, I am filled with amazement and admiration, and it is only when one gets at the heart, the confidence of people, that one learns. That is the reason I like confidences -- friendships that only grow in intimacy[11]...." "I live mostly in others. I expand with fresh ideas and culture."[12]

[l] Friends Coll., February 18, 1916.
[2] Ibid, January 26, 1903.
[3] Ibid, February 18, 1916.
[4] Swami Dhireshananda and Swami Vidyatmananda, edi tors, Atman Alone Abides: Conversations with Swami Atulananda, p. 88.
[5] With the Swamis, p. 294.
[6] Friends Coll., to Theodore Whitmarsh, May 1926.
[7] Culme-Seymour Coll., Decem ber 7, 1938.
[8] Whitmarsh, 1986.
[9] Whitmarsh, 1986.
[10] Early Draft Late and Soon, p. 15.
[11] Culme-Seymour Co ll., _March 21, 1939.
[12] Culme-Seymour Co ll, November 27, 1938.

BETTY

After Frank Leggett's death in 1909, Joe had encouraged Betty to "spread her wings" and look upon her new freedom as a great opportunity. Frances Leggett had been sent to live at Lady Isabel Margesson's at Barnt Green in England, and Betty leased a house in nearby Stratford-on Avon, so that Frances could come there on weekends and holidays. Joe loved Stratford, home of William Shakespeare, because her good friend Sir Frank Benson was director of the Shakespeare Theatre there.[1]

In 1907 Hollister and Jeanne Sturges had travelled to India. Their experience there had been a very happy one, and in late 1912 Betty, Alberta, and George Montagu also made that journey. Betty wrote letters to Joe giving vivid and enthusiastic accounts of her meetings with Sri Sarada Devi, the Holy Mother, who was so fond of Joe, and who shared with Betty many stories of her early years as the wife of Sri Ramakrishna. Upon leaving India, Betty wrote to Joe from aboard ship. Her letter, dated January 20, 1913, with its dramatic narrative of Sri Sarada Devi, is of great historical importance.

I went to the little house to see [Holy Mother] and stayed endlessly. She was quite free, with head and hands uncovered, calm and beneficent with the little women crawling to her feet, putting them aside gently in removed places and having a mat spread for me. She told me how she loved you and Alberta and how I was to tell you to come again with me to see her.

She related anecdotes of her early life, when at fifteen she sought her husband and from impulse set out alone and was lost in a forest and there overtaken by a notorious robber. She approached him and said, "Father, I have lost my way. Show me out of the forest, and I will worship you." Whereupon he fell at her feet and then led her to his hut, where he ... and his wife both bowed and worshipped and thereupon became her first disciples. [Then the man] led her to Dakshineswar, the temple where Sri Ramakrishna lived as a saint. She told him she had come to find her husband. He talked with her a little and eventually laid his holy hand upon her, and she went, with fears and calling out, into samadhi -- as he did. When she returned to consciousness, he worshipped her as the Holy Mother....

She was very gentle and halting and full of reverence for him as she talked, and made many gestures of adoration and little prayers during her stories. She seemed surprised that I should be so "good."... She took my face in her hands several times, and I kissed her hands, and we parted several times with much emotion.... I left the sanctuary in which she sat laden with three huge garlands which I attempted to arrange upon my frock with some taste, greatly to her delight, and she also touched the flowers with a woman's enjoyment of taste and order, laughing like a child.

I visited all her rooms and objects, images and pictures, and thought of the similar simplicity and almost poverty of our Madonna, who must have been so like [her] at fifty. When I had gone all over the house, I found her at the head of the stairs, fairly radiant, again taking my face in her hands and blessing me. I had tears, and I thought she had, but I couldn't quite see for my own.[2]

The party went up the Ganges to Dakshineswar, where Sri Ramakrishna had lived and where he had trained his famous disciple, Swami Vivekananda. According to Betty's letter, George Montagu immediately wanted to know "on what spot" Vivekananda had received the holy touch of Sri Ramakrishna, and there George meditated. Betty's letter continues:

We went over and over the little rooms and verandahs and then put on shoes and visited the banyan tree again, whose huge limb has fallen and covered the place in which He sat and meditated and taught. This limb has taken root in several places and now [is] fastened to the earth forevermore. George couldn't be stirred from that spot, but I went on to the tree where the saint Ramakrishna did Tantric worship, uprooted by Vivekananda as too dangerous for most natures after his Master's death.

Sister Nivedita and Josephine MacLeod, Bruges, Belgium, fall 1907.

Hall's Croft, Stratford-upon-Avon.

Then we made a wide circle and skirted the Temple and met on the beautiful wide steps that lead to the Ganges, and swept down the river to the [Math] in time for evening service.... It was far more affecting that I [had expected].... We were alone within the chapel, the monks waiting for us out of sight, except for the priest officiating, which he did with one hand, most exquisitely gesturing as he made the offerings of flowers, incense, and oblations of water from different vessels, the other hand incessantly ringing a bell to the accompaniment of several gongs outside that must have wakened the dead. This music went on for twenty minutes, unbearable at first, and at length the ear became unconscious of any noise of dissonance. And the second it ceased, the chants began -- very deep and sonorous, with perfect rhythm and sudden pauses like the stroke of an anvil that gave great dignity to the chorus of voices. One of the chants was in Sanskrit, the other in Bengalee, and both were written by Swamiji. They only chant his songs, and with all the beauty of the ensemble, I missed the amazing depths of his own voice.[3]

[1] Late and Soon, p. 289.
[2] Friends Coll.
[3] Friends Coll.

HALL'S CROFT

When Betty returned to Stratford, England in the spring of 1913, a house which she had had an eye on for a long time was on the market. It was called Hall's Croft, and had been the home of Shakespeare's daughter Susanna, when she married Dr. John Hall. Betty very much wanted this house, and on June 20, 1913, a Trust Deed was signed, putting the house in Josephine MacLeod's name[1]. However, Hall's Croft was very much Betty's house. It was she who decorated it, and it was entirely she who entertained in it.

Frances Leggett wrote in *Late and Soon* that her mother had never before stayed in one place long enough to be a strong, central part of it, nor had she ever lived in any house that had really belonged to her, all of them having been owned by other people, furnished by other people, and cared for by other people. Hall's Croft, she stated, was perhaps the only house that seemed to belong to Betty, taking a beautiful shape under her hand.

H. Edward Forrest, an authority on the houses of Stratford, described Hall's Croft in *Old Houses of Stratford-upon-Avon*, mentioning certain restoration work which Betty Leggett had done. He wrote:

... Mrs. Leggett has brought to light many ancient features hitherto hidden behind eighteenth- or nineteenth-century partitions. Among other things, seven ancient stone fireplaces have been discovered, all of the latter part of the sixteenth century.... The house is for the most part Elizabethan, but the eastern wing is at least a century earlier, as it displays a close-timbered frame similar to ... other very early timber buildings in Stratford. The front [of the house] towards the street with its overhanging story was till 1922 buried under a coat of rough-cast, which below formed a separate wall so as to bring the lower story flush with the upper: within the room there was until lately another wall of lath-and-plaster, so that the original oak and wattle was the middle wall of three. During restoration several of the original windows were discovered under the plaster, some of them still retaining the diamond-paned leaded lights with ancient greenish glass. The Jacobean staircase is very handsome and has massive newel-posts with obtusely pointed finials.... It seems probable that the Elizabethan part of the house was added by Dr. John Hall about the time of his marriage with Susanna Shakespeare, and there can be little doubt that the poet was a frequent visitor to this delightful dwelling[2].

In *Late and Soon*, Frances Leggett described the great delight Betty Leggett took in furnishing Hall's Croft:

Here she had the fun of buying everything, beds, cupboards, chairs, tables, all in a different style from anything she had bought before.... This was a house you mixed up a little, this was the kind of house you played with.... Every room with its special character, every room to be treated differently. The bedrooms were furnished comfortably yet in keeping, with bedspreads picked up somewhere on her travels, chinaware from Provence, a mirror from Tuscany. Never was there such a hotchpotch of English, Oriental, European of all ages; never did a house so express its owner[3].

The house had had a series of owners, and some of its rooms had names: the Music Room (from the years when the house had served as a boarding school for boys and had been known as Cambridge House)[4], the Blue Room, the Italian Room (later renamed correctly by Alberta, the Spanish Room), and, incredibly, the Prophet's Chamber[5] -- which, of course had to be Tantine's room. And to this room Tantine had brought *her* precious treasures: relics of the one she considered "the Prophet." There was a thin alabaster bas-relief of Vivekananda -- a smaller copy of a large one which Betty had had made for the future Vivekananda Temple at Belur Math, and which she had brought back for Tantine from India. Tantine had it set into the wall of this room, and with a window behind it, the effect was a translucent glow[6]. She also kept here a pitcher given her by Holy Mother, many mementos of Swamiji, and all of his bound volumes, adding to the collection as each title was published.[7]

In 1929 *Woman's Journal*, a London monthly, published nine pages of photographs taken at Hall's Croft, including a photo of the Prophet's Chamber.

Nikos Kazantzakis called Hall's Croft "an immense wing of the British Museum" when he and his wife, Eleni, stayed there in 1939 as guests of Tantine. Eleni (or Helen) Kazantzakis also wrote about Hall's Croft in her biography of Nikos:

I had often dreamed of living a few days out of a fairy tale. But I had never thought Tantine would offer them to us against the current of the time in the very days when the last myths were being killed.

Hall's Croft was more than an old Shakespearean home -- an entire museum lay at our disposal: we could roam freely and eat our meals in front of fireplaces where trunks of trees hundreds of years old burned slowly, over a period of several days.

Nikos ... loved to walk along the banks of the Avon with its white swans and its rose arbors and through the medieval lanes, where quaint characters chattered on their doorsteps. The English countryside with its beautiful black-and-white Holstein cows enchanted him.[8]

Betty loved company, and visitors came often to Hall's Croft, some dropping in just to see this showplace, unique in the fact that it was actually inhabited, as few other houses of Shakespeare's day now were. Frances Leggett recalled:

A dozen times a day the bell would peal and clang (Elizabethan bell tied with a rope to the back quarters), and there would be someone Betty knew, who had been sent by friends, motoring in the neighbourhood. All were welcome. It was what she liked, having something to offer the 'discerning'. Followed conducted tours upstairs and down; even the bathroom, inserted ingeniously if precariously in a niche in the passage, with a gothic railing open to the world (the only bath-room and anything but private), was of interest. Then a cup of tea would be served in the panelled room before a low peat fire (you could never be warm enough in England), with pretty English tea-set and delicious scones, or often enough lunch outside on the terrace, set on a long table, near the house....

And after lunch a stroll around the garden to admire the flowers ... and the old mulberry tree, bent nearly double (more than three hundred years old, they said, and certainly known by Shakespeare). Then back onto the terrace, where there might be conversation lasting well into the afternoon, with Joe on the couch (old French *directoire*, painted blue by Betty), sound asleep, no matter who was present. Joe liked having people in, but she had no stamina and left the entertaining of them to Betty.[9]

At night, it was easy. Friends came for dinner and were taken to see a play. Or vice-versa. Sometimes after a performance, Sir Frank Benson brought some of his actors back to Hall's Croft for a late supper.[10]

Betty also continued to maintain the house at 12, Bruton Street in London, and it was there in 1914 that she and France installed themselves to prepare for France's formal debut, or Introduction to Society. Betty wrote about it to Hollister and Jeanne Sturges:

... France was very calm and lovely at Court in white satin and plain tulle train. I, in black and pink. Our Ambassador was charming and found us after he and Mrs. Page left the Throne Room. The King [George V] and Queen [Mary] were gorgeous in Kohinoors[11] and gold lace -- seated, unlike King Edward and Alexandra and Queen Victoria, who stood. We seemed to know many and I was quite conscious of a rather magnificent scene altogether. We ... were presented at about 10 [o'clock] -- there were about 400 attending -- the beautiful Throne Room was packed with Diplomats, princes and personal friends of their Majesties.[12]

[1] Dr. Robert Bearman, senior archivist, Shakespeare Birth place Trust , Stratford-upon Avon: interview with author, February 16, 1998.

[2] H, E. Forrest, F.L.S., The Old Houses of Stratford-upon Avon , (London: Methuen & Company Ltd., 1925) , pp. 139-41.

[3] Late and Soon , p. 290.

[4] Mary Phillips, researcher, Shakespeare Birthplace Trust: letter to Viscount Margesson, July 22, 1985; made available through the kind ness of Viscount Margesson. The letter details early history of Hall's Croft, and states that it became known as Hall's Croft in 1892.

[5] Late and Soon, pp. 241, 284.
[6] Culme-Seymour Coll., May 31, 1944.
[7] Late and Soon, p. 241. Also, Swami Nityatmananda, M. - Tbe Apostle and the Evangelist 3:191. [Hereafter, M. the Apostle.]
[8] Helen Kazantzakis, Nikos Kazantzakis (A Biography), p. 380.
[9] Late and Soon, pp. 291-92.
[10] Late and Soon., p. 292.
[11] Kohinoors are large Indian diamonds, which were added to the Crown Jewels of England during the reign of Queen Victoria.
[12] Kohinoors are large Indian diamonds, which were added to the Crown Jewels of England during the reign of Queen Victoria., p. 300.

A SPLENDID FABRIC

Though Tantine did not consider herself a "worker," it is amazing that she had a keen understanding of the effect of work on workers. In 1913 she wrote to Swami Virajananda, a disciple of Vivekananda, who was in the Himalayas. He had been at work for several years on *The Life of Swami Vivekananda*, and he was feeling very discouraged just now, thinking it might never be finished. Tantine wrote:

... You have so steadily kept your shoulder to the wheel of incessant work in Mayavati. I wonder if you went away for a good two months' holiday, dear Swami, to get a new perspective of yourself and the work that you are doing -- if you would not be willing and ready to return to it with renewed vigour and enthusiasm....

In fifteen or twenty years your physical forces must begin to lessen -- and by that time a whole generation of adherents can be trained to continue the Himalayan outpost of our prophet's work -- and such a work it is! I have had no other thought in my life and heart these eighteen years than Swamiji and what he stood for -- and during most of those years I've been more or less an invalid. Now strength is coming ... and forty years may yet see us at work.... Let me know if there is anything I can do to lessen your burden or to give you freedom for a few months. One needs resilience for work to get its joy -- and straining at the *same* kind of work for years upon years somehow saps the give and take -- that elasticity -- doesn't it!

... How it all works out like a Chinese puzzle, each part fitting in with a nicety that no forethought of ours could have managed -- but in keeping steady to *our* particular job, the whole is piece-mealed into one splendid fabric! My job was to *recognize* Swamiji![1]

And both Swami Virajananda and Tantine did have almost forty years left to them.

Tantine's understanding of the effect of work on workers and what was needed to work give a clue to her success in encouraging others to take on and carry through on projects. She was behind many activities, encouraging, supporting with money, engendering enthusiasm, carrying the seed, as she said. In her recognition of the great force that was Vivekananda, she herself became a messenger of that force. With her great love of people she was able during the remainder of her lifetime to carry Swamiji's message to all the corners of the world in many diverse ways. Since she was always on the go, she had contacts everywhere upon whom she was not reticent to call if they could possibly help with a project for Vivekananda. And to those who were the workers -- Swami Virajananda, Sister Christine, Dr. J. C. Bose, Boshi Sen, and many young monks of the Ramakrishna Order, she was the indefatigable support, always there with words of enthusiasm and joy, reminding them of the great Vivekananda's words, character, and dreams. She never seemed to stop going, and since she did not stay long in any one place, she did not develop painful attachments. She was free and could help others to feel free.

In the fall of 1910, when Sister Christine was in America, she had met young Frank Alexander, who, like her, was from Detroit, Michigan, and "on fire with spiritual zeal and love and devotion to Swamiji." He wanted to devote himself to the Vedanta work but needed financial support. Writing to Tantine, Sister Christine said she would not go to Sara Bull for help, even if Sara were well, because she would not give the "freedom in work" as Tantine would[2]. Tantine did give him some support for a time, and he was able to go to India where he helped Swami Virajananda write the biography of Swami Vivekananda.

Later, Tantine developed mixed feelings about Frank Alexander as is evident from two letters she wrote. The first was to Alberta, February 11, 1913, in which Tantine stated that she had feared Alexander "might burn out." Then she added: "The Swamiji book [volume I of *The Life of Swami Vivekananda*] is full of beauty and understanding and I rejoice that Detroit has paid another tribute to our Prophet. He always loved it more than any place in America[3]." And in February of 1916 she wrote to Betty: "... that [Frank Alexander] might face himself & life better, it seemed wise that I should cut off his mental dependence on you -- or me -- financially -- and also that he should go out freed from the terrible illusion that his own thoughts were

inspired by Swamiji! That course leads to vanity - or insanity[4]!" In 1917 Alexander died after a sudden illness.[5]

[1] Swami Shraddhananda, Tbe Story of an Epoch, pp. 128-30.
[2] Friends Coll., September 13, 1910.
[3] Culme-Seymour Coll., Febru ary 11, 1913.
[4] Sturges Coll., February 3, 1916.
[5] Friends Coll., Sister Christine to Josephine MacLeod, tember 5, 1917.

THE MAGNET OF BELUR

Before his death in 1902, Swami Vivekananda had made two significant statements about his mission in the world and about Belur Math. He said, "I have given them enough for fifteen hundred years[1]," and, "The power of [Belur] will last fifteen hundred years[2]." He also said about death: "It may be that I shall find it good to get outside my body -- to cast it off like a worn-out garment. But I shall not cease to work. I shall inspire men everywhere, until the world knows that it is one with God."[3]

Six months after Vivekananda's passing, Sister Nivedita had written to Tantine about how, during his lifetime, he "had cried for men" to come and work. "But," she wrote, "he did not know that until the curtain had fallen, it would not be clear [to others] what was the idea for which he had lived. When that idea should stand revealed, men would flock round Him in millions. As Ramakrishna was unconscious -- even so was He,... Men come of themselves now. No one is necessary. He is the magnet -- and that draws the steel dust of itself."[4]

Swami Saradananda had also mentioned in a letter to Tantine, following Vivekananda's death: "The work here [at the Math] is spreading widely since his removal. It is one of those rare cases in history where the sacred seal of death made the cause to be consecrated and accepted more widely than when the worker was living! The young especially are showing such eagerness to accept him as the ideal."[5]

Over the next dozen years the religious community at Belur Math had grown at a tremendous rate under the divinely inspired guidance of its president, Swami Brahmananda, and the cool-headed administration of its general secretary, Swami Saradananda. But more important, the influence of the Math, founded on the ideals of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, had reached out through numerous channels to inspire and serve people in all parts of India. Tantine's reminiscences reflect the momentous change that had come about in the nation since the spring of 1902 before Swami Vivekananda's mahasamadhi. She writes:

Fourteen years elapsed before I returned to India. Then I went accompanying Professor and Mrs. Geddes. I then found instead of India being a place of desolation, all India was alive with Swamiji's ideas, with half a dozen monasteries, thousands of centres, hundreds of societies.[6]

Tantine exaggerates, but there were at least half a dozen monasteries by 1915, and there were certainly dozens of smaller societies, retreats, and other service missions connected with the Ramakrishna Order. Tantine was to visit India many times during the remaining years of her life, and on each visit she felt tremendous joy, seeing more and more progress being made in Vivekananda's work.

Tantine's first *return* visit to India in 1915 came about because Professor Patrick Geddes had been invited by the governor of Madras to help with Town Planning[7], and he and his wife, Anna, invited Tantine to join them on the journey. Geddes was famous for having redeemed the city of Edinburgh by changing its slums into invest-ment opportunities yielding a five percent return[8]. As the reader will recall, Professor Geddes had spent much time with Vivekananda at the Paris Exposition in 1900, and according to Swami Ekatmananda, in an article about the Scottish professor, it was that contact with Vivekananda that deepened Geddes' "interest in the land and soul of India."[9]

Hopeful that Professor Geddes would be asked to remain in India to serve, Tantine had the idea of remaining there too. "My people in England are all well, and I am not needed," she wrote on December 4, 1915 to Mary Hale.[10]

She had arrived in Calcutta in the fall of 1915 and by mid-December was staying in Sister Nivedita's old house and school[11]. The first visit Tantine made upon her arrival in Calcutta was to Belur, where she had last seen Swamiji. She felt very much at home there with his brother-disciples, with whom she had kept in touch all these years and who knew her as their Yum or JoJo or Tantine.

Writing to Alberta on December 16, 1915, she described the marble bas-relief of Vivekananda which Betty had had made for the Vivekananda Temple. It was being installed now, and

Tantine had seen to it that the men put it into the wall *flush*. This had meant building the plaster out about four inches so that the marble frames would be its only separation from the wall. "They could not put it *into* the wall," she wrote, "as the wall is to be the crypt foundation of the new library which they hope eventually to raise over it."[12]

Certainly her next visit must have been to Udbodhan, the house of Sri Sarada Devi, the Holy Mother. Tantine later told Romain Rolland about a conversation she once had with Sri Sarada Devi in which they discussed the difference between Sri Ramakrishna and Vivekananda. Holy Mother spoke no English, and Tantine spoke no Bengali, so one of the women living with Holy Mother acted as interpreter. Tantine said to her: "Your husband had the best part; he only had to speak sweet words in India among his fellow men; that is why it was a joy for him. Vivekananda's mission was more painful. He had to be the propagator of Indian thought abroad, among strange and hostile people. His role was the more heroic." "Yes," the Holy Mother answered. "Swamiji was the greatest. My husband used to say that he was the body and Vivekananda was the head."[13]

Tantine also told Romain Rolland about the Mother herself, saying: "The Holy Mother had a natural affinity with Western women, able to speak with them on any subject, and had a simplicity, a fineness, a delightful disposition. Just as pure as Ramakrishna or Vivekananda, she was all the while living a holy life and at the same time capable of being interested, with the joy of a child, in the attire of her European friends. Her great valor, however, was not recognized in her own village, where she did not show that she was any different from other women."[15]

Tantine wrote to Alberta once, saying, "You are sure to win out with your mother's heart and woman's wit. On this last, particularly build. Sarada Devi used it with Rama-krishna, I learn."[15]

[1] Life II, p. 590.
[2] Culme-Seymour Coll., September 21, 1922.
[3] Life II, p. 661.
[4] Letters SN II, #221, p. 538.
[5] Friends Coll., October 4, 1902.
[6] Rems., p. 243.
[7]Friends Col l., Josephine Mac Leod to Frances Leggett, 1941.
[8] Early Draft Late and Soon, p. 101.
[9] Swami Ekatmananda, "Profiles in Greatness," PB, March 1986, p. 134.
[10] Friends Coll.
[11] Culme-Seymour Coll., December 16, 1915.
[12] Culme-Seymour Coll., December 16, 1915.
[13] Inde, May 16, 1927, p. 201.
[14] Ibid., May 13, 1927, p. 196.
[15] Culme-Seymour Coll., June 15, 1922.

NIVEDITA'S SCHOOL

It had been only four years before that Sister Nivedita had for the last time paced the small, quiet rooms of Bosepara Lane and noted the repairs that were needed and thought her whole school project was a failure[1]. In her will, as has been mentioned, she had left control of the school to Sister Christine, and Christine had accepted that responsibility. Now, in 1915, Nivedita's school was flourishing with an enrollment of one hundred and fifty girls, supported mostly by a stipend of one thousand dollars, sent each year by Sara Bull's brother, Joseph Thorp, in his sister's memory. Sister Christine had gone to America in 1914, and had then been prevented from returning to India by the outbreak of the First World War. In her absence the school was being managed by Sister Sudhira. On December 4, 1915, Tantine wrote to Mary Hale, asking for support for the school, which she declared to be "among the finest in the world."

We all love [Christine, she wrote], for she is *doing* the work Swamiji had so much at heart and she actually hasn't enough to eat, so narrow is the margin of money.... I know that deep down in your heart Swamiji's teachings are the truest things you cherish, just so with me, but my life of freedom gives me a little more liberty of saying what I feel! But that doesn't mean that I am doing any more for Him than you and Harriet are.[2]

When Mary Hale wrote back, saying she would not be sending any money, Tantine wrote to her at once: "Never mind about helping Sister Christine. The time will come when your freedom to do and help will come[3]." But to Alberta she wrote the same day, "This is a rather pathetic confession [of Mary's], isn't it?"[4]

Never one to lose a single opportunity to somehow derive benefit from someone for Swamiji's work, Tantine asked Mary Hale to send her any of Sister Nivedita's letters she had received. Letters from many of Nivedita's contacts were being collected with a view to getting them published. Nivedita's sister, May (Mrs. Ernest Wilson), was to edit them. "I am giving her *carte blanche* with all the hundreds of letters that Margot wrote me," she stated[5]. In later years when Tantine met Lizelle Reymond, she had a sudden intuitive hunch that this woman should write Sister Nivedita's biography, and she handed over to her a large collection of Nivedita's letters, which Reymond then used in writing *The Dedicated*[6]. Lizelle Reymond later turned over that collection of letters to Srimat Anirvan of Calcutta to hold for the use of future researchers. Ten years later, Srimat Anirvan gave the letters to Sankari Prasad Basu, who in 1982 brought out two volumes of *The Letters of Sister Nivedita*[7].

[1] Longfoumey, p. 225.
[2] Friends Coll., December 4, 1915.
[3] Ibid., February 18, 1916.
[4] Culme-Seymour Coll., February 18, 1916.
[5] Friends Coll., February 18, 1916.
[6] Dedicated , p. vi.
[7] Letters SN I, Introduction, pp. 25-27.

A MARRIAGE MADE IN HEAVEN

Tantine stayed in Calcutta until mid-January 1916, then went to Mayavati to visit Charlotte Sevier. From there she went on to Bombay[1]. Though Tantine had considered staying on in India for at least another year, correspondence clues indicate that she probably broke her stay long enough to go to England in April of 1916 to attend the wedding of her niece Frances Leggett[2], who was marrying Captain David Margesson, son of Mortimer Margesson and Lady Isabel Margesson. (David Margesson was then Adjutant, 11th Hussars, and was created Viscount Margesson in 1942.)[3] The wedding took place on Saturday, April 29, at Holy Trinity Church, Stratford-on-Avon, followed by a huge reception at Hall's Croft.

The match between Frances Leggett and David Margesson was one Betty was not enthusiastic about -- Lady Isabel Margesson being Tantine's close friend, rather than hers; but it was a match Tantine delighted in. Later she remarked that it was "surely a marriage made in Heaven," and liked to recall how Swami Vivekananda had been present at the wedding of Frank and Betty Leggett, and had blessed both Frances (at Ridgely) and David Margesson (when he gave talks in the Margessons' home). Tantine always thought she and Swamiji had had a hand in the marriage of Frances and David[4]. The Margessons had four children: Janet (born 1918); Gay -- later, Lady Charteris (born 1919); Frank -- later, 2nd Viscount Margesson (born 1922); and Mary France, (born 1926; died 1930). Their marriage dissolved in 1940.

[1] Friends Coll., Josephine MacLeod to Mary Hale, February 18, 1916.
[2] Sturges Coll., [probably June] 1916.
[3] Viscount Margesson, letter to author , June 14, 1994.
[4] Late and Soon, p. 110.

HEAVEN ON THE GANGES

By June 1916 Tantine was definitely in India, and spent the summer and early fall visiting Mysore, Bangalore, and Madras. In Mysore she met and was deeply impressed by the young Maharani, wife of the Maharaja, and her grandmother. Writing to Betty Leggett, Tantine stated:
I was taken to see [the Maharani's] grandmother of 103 & later joined by her father, a Rajput prince & we all sat on the floor together talking about "the Lord". *You know the fun one can have!* Well we had it! & tomorrow they send their motor to fetch me for another visit & talk.
The beloved old grandmother -- though blind -- has still got the Rajput fire in her! Fearless -- strong -- not a touch of weakness of spirit! I just love it when people live & die *game!* I can't bear the whining type, can you? Regretting youth, regretting one's mistakes, regretting anything! I cannot understand why I personally have got such a weak body when my spirit is so untamed & fearless!
... [The young Maharani] is a lovely creature to look upon & so spontaneous and responsive. The Dowager Maharani, who was Regent for seven years -- of course is *the* Power in the Palace, as are all mothers in India. So the young Maharani has little scope for her powers, till she is head in turn[1].
In Bangalore Tantine happened to be visiting at the same time that Swami Brahmananda was there. Tantine, with her sweet nature and the fact that she had been a close associate of Vivekananda, was very welcome at Ramakrishna centres. She was, however, very talkative at times. Swami Brahmananda's mind tended to remain in a very high state, and he could not bear too much noise. If he heard that Tantine was coming to see him, he frankly asked his attendant to tell her he was not up to seeing her, implying that he was sick. This happened three times. Finally, Tantine camouflaged herself in a green dress, walked through the dense, tropical garden at the rear of the ashrama, and came right up to the swami's veranda. "There you are!" she called out to him, and he, a bit flustered, had to cover by saying, "Today I am quite all right." Tantine laughed and said: "What else can you say? You have to admit it. I caught you, didn't I?"[2]
On June 26, 1916, George Montagu's uncle died. At this time, George became 9th Earl of Sandwich, and Alberta became Countess of Sandwich.
By the time Tantine returned to Belur Math that fall, the new Guest House had been built and she lived there for the first time in November 1916[3]. She was actually the second Westerner to stay there, Charlotte Sevier having done so for a fortnight[4]. Betty Leggett had donated ten thousand rupees for the construction of this building which was intended for the use of visiting Western devotees. Later Betty also donated twenty thousand rupees for the building of Leggett House for use by the monks[5].
Tantine was so happy in this little two-roomed Guest House that she considered changing her after-India travel plans and remaining there for another year. Evidence from correspondence, however, indicates that she left India in March of 1917[6]. In a letter dated November 15, 1916, Tantine described for Betty Leggett her delight in the new Guest House and in Holy Mother:
After 18 years I'm back again in this Heaven Home Haven, & hope to stay on quietly all this month.... It's so heavenly being quite alone with no one to explain to or apologize to! This Guest House was not built a year ago when I came, else I doubt if I would have left it at all! Siva!
The Holy Mother & I had an hour together just like in the old days -- laughing & comparing notes & experiences like two girls! She's such fun! Not aged an hour while my hair is white. Hers is black. Though she is many years my senior![7]
On November 16, Tantine wrote to the Countess of Sandwich, expressing her delight at being alone in the Guest House, and she told about asking Sri Sarada Devi how to meditate. She wrote:

I am in Heaven!... I had thought to be lonely here - but on the contrary I find a curious happiness as if I had come Home after 18 years of wanderings. I am quite alone in this little two-roomed Guest House of the Math with my own Christian Servant -- and go to the Math whenever I like, always welcome to go and do anything. It's a new experience this -- seeing the daily routine of the 30 to 40 monks who are up at 4 AM meditating at the Math which is specially holy. Swamiji's little tomb I see from my bed & the river with its life of movement & trade. One of Swamiji's disciples called Swami Nirbhaya-nanda is on personal attendance on me -- and as he had travelled 15 years ago with Swamiji & Okakura & me to Bud Gaya it seems like a breath from those days.

I spent an hour with Sarada Devi and go again tomorrow. It was like talking to you or mother [Betty]. Jumping from one subject to another in our exuberance & joy of getting together at last to compare notes & each other.

I asked her about meditation & how to do it. She said to think of the Divinity in Swamiji, but I said that in ordinary life he was uppermost always in my mind, but that in meditation I purposely excluded him. This did astonish her! But she said that Ramakrishna had said it had taken the power of seven sages to make Swamiji, & that in Ramakrishna [the power of the sages] had brought him down to Earth!

All the young boys -- brahmacharins -- are her disciples. They quite look to her as the head of the Math. She never gives any other initiation than to give the yellow cloth![8]

Swami Gambhirananda recorded another story about Tantine's fascination with Sri Sarada Devi. In *Sri Sarada Devi: The Holy Mother* he wrote:

From the conduct of Miss MacLeod one evening we can get a glimpse of the kind of absorption the Mother's love could bring about. That day Swami Nirbhayananda had escorted her in a boat from Belur Math to Udbodhan. When they returned, the evening service at the chapel was in progress. Miss Mac-Leod made her obeisance at the shrine, meditated for a while, then started for the Guest House. As it had become dark, Swami Dhirananda asked a brahmachari to accompany her with a lantern. When he drew near her, she was heard repeating to herself, "I've seen her. I've seen her." Suddenly she was aware of his presence, and bringing her face to his ears she whispered with great emotion, "The Holy Mother! I've seen her." She covered a furlong in this mood of elation, hardly noticing where her footsteps fell or if her feet touched the ground at all; and every now and then she kept on uttering the word "Mother"....[9]

Though Tantine was talkative some of the time, she appreciated the hush and stillness of the Ganges and the monastery, and wrote to Betty on November 26, 1916: "The warmth and peace and beauty is what I find so entrancing here. London -- Stratford -- Ganges -- not a bad choice of earth for a lady without a penny! I laugh & chuckle -- save -- & give & play & write -- and wonder when all this *incognito* must be given up. With Francy or Berta [Frances or Alberta] as Governor's or Viceroy's wife, it's bound to come."[10]

On December 6, 1916 Tantine reflected on the simplicity of her life in India in a letter to Betty, saying:

You and I make incidents of what others call necessities! I was seven months here in India without any servant to the amazement of the Indians. I hid it from the Europeans & now have a man who gives me tea & toast at 6 a.m....

Today I go to Dakshineswar to talk to the nephew of Ramakrishna. I asked him the other night if he had ever seen anybody with any of Ramakrishna's power and he said, "No -- never," & I said, "Wasn't Swamiji a little like him?" And he said, "No, not at all." Now that's what I think. Swamiji had his *OWN* power & that he was not carrying Ramakrishna's message but his own & that's what we loved...[11]

When Tantine left India in the spring of 1917, the First World War was making ship travel quite hazardous. Swami Premananda was very concerned for her welfare and tried to persuade her not to leave India just then, when so many ships were being attacked. Seeing her determination to sail, he blessed her. From the ship, she wrote to him, saying: "Since I am going with the blessings of a brother disciple of Swamiji, not only I, but all the passengers on the boat will reach the destination safely." When he read her letter, he remarked with emotion

to a devotee: “See what faith she has! Faith and devotion transform a man into a god, a saint, a free soul. This American devotee lived in our Guest House at Belur Math for nearly four months. She is very good and large-hearted.”[12]

It was on this ship that Tantine lost the precious items that had been kept in her purse for seventeen years: Vivekananda’s “Great Letter” to her, written from Alameda, California, April 18, 1900; the tiny piece of burnt cloth which had blown to Sister Nivedita’s feet in front of Vivekananda’s funeral pyre and which Nivedita had considered his “real message” to Joe; and one letter Nivedita had written to Tantine about his last days[13]. Fortunately, Tantine apparently had made a true copy of Swamiji’s letter, and she continued to share its inspiring message with others.[14]

Tantine was to make many more trips to India, living there off and on until the Second World War began. In fact, *after Swami Vivekananda’s passing, she probably made a total of fourteen trips to India, beginning in 1915*. During some visits, she stayed several months and in a few cases she stayed a couple of years. Usually, however, she would spend the winter months there, then go elsewhere to visit friends or family.

During Tantine’s next trip to India in 1922, she arranged to have a room built for herself above the Guest House. Once Mahendranath Gupta (M.) remarked: “Look at the Math with Miss MacLeod living there. Such inconveniences -- malaria, different country, different language -- what an inconvenience, but she doesn’t care. What luxury she and other Western devotees have grown up with, and look where they are now!... Forsaking their motherland, riches, dear and near ones, they come here. We have heard of the love of the gopis. The same love has manifested itself now.”[15]

Though Tantine was often to say, “I haven’t any renunciation, but I’ve freedom,”[16] M. remarked about her: “Oh, what renunciation hers is.... Oh, what signs of perfect love[17]!” Swami Atulananda (whom she had known as Guru-das in America), also remarked about her adaptability to India. Writing to Ida Ansell, February 3, 1924, he reported: “Miss MacLeod has been at the Math for over a year now. The heat means nothing to her and she is perfectly happy; she will not hear of going back to the West even for a visit though her sister, Mrs. Leggett, who is in Calcutta now, invites her.... Miss MacLeod keeps good health.”[18]

Indeed, Tantine found herself being moved more and more by the spiritual power she saw being manifested in India. Writing in June 1922 to Lady Sandwich, she stated:

Reams of letters awaited me here [at Belur] yesterday morning on my return from Puri on the Bay of Bengal and the Jaggernaut Car Festival. A great sight ... all India seems in pilgrimage in quest of God! I suppose really everyone, everywhere is, only India is conscious of it, [and] in that lies the difference.

At Bhubaneshwar, eighteen miles from Puri, once the capital of Orissa and the site of 1,000 temples now crumbling into the dust, Brahmanandaji has built a fine new Ramakrishna Math -- temple and dispensary. So the new wine of this last great Incarnation is already renourishing ancient India, and a desert again blooming into new life and fertility. I was much moved by it all. One feels oneself to be on the uptide. Floating on the deep heart of the ocean of life as Swamiji put it -- “without effort, without will.”

The day before Swamiji died he told them [his brother monks] how great this place, Belur Math, was to be. They smiled incredulously. He said, “The power of this place will last nine hundred years [*actually, he said fifteen hundred years*]. Nothing can withstand it.” Today there is a fire ceremony, one boy made a brahmacharin, several to be given their mantrams. It seems that the Holy Mother frequently gave the mantram at first sight -- as if by inner perception. She saw the need, the way the aspirant would grow. Sometimes they make brahmacharins and give the mantram later, as in today’s ceremony with Shivananda[19].

[1] Sturges Coll., June 23, 1916.

[2] Pravrajika Prabuddhaprana, Tantine, the Life of Josephine Macl eod, pp. 157-58. [Hereaf ter , Tantine.]

[3] Sturges Coll., November 15, 1916.
[4] Sturges Coll., November 1916.
[5] Culme-Seymour Coll., Novem ber 2 and 27, 1938.
[6] Sturges Coll., November 16, 1916
[7] Sturges Coll, November 15, 1916.
[8] Sturges Coll., November 16, 1916.
[9] Swami Gambhirananda, Holy ilfother Shri Sarada Devi, p. 392.
[10] Sturges Coll., November 26, 1916.
[11] Sturges Coll., December 6, 1916.
[12] Swami Prabhavananda, editor, Swami Premananda: Teachings and Reminiscences, p. 80.
[13] Editors, "A Soulful Epistle from a Devoted Hean," VK, January 1974, p. 357.
[14] Tantine shared Swami Vivekananda's letter of April 18, 1900, with Nikos Kazantzakis more than two decades later at Hall's Croft. By then it had been published in an edition of Inspired Talks.
[15] Swami Nityatmananda, M. The Apostle 3:41.
[16] Culme-Seymour Coll., March 12, 1923.
[17] Swami Nityatmananda, M. The Apostle 4:42.
[18] With the Swamis, pp. 281-82.
[19] Culme-Seymour Coll., June 29, 1922.

DEATH: THE GREAT ADVENTURE

Between 1917 and 1922, Tantine had had a beautiful crystal oval designed by Rene Lalique, with many copies made, and this unique oval crystal, showing Swami Vivekananda as a wandering monk, became another of her signature pieces, "a sort of visiting card," as she said, which she happily shared with other devotees. Rene Lalique also made at her direction a bronze medal dipped in gold, showing Sri Ramakrishna on one side and Swami Vivekananda on the other, with dates of birth and death. She wanted something to give, as she said, "to the Indians who now wear photographs."[1]

These items she carried with her when she returned to India in 1922.

Tantine's ideas about death were greatly shaped by the spiritual people she met during her many visits to India. In 1923 she wrote to Lady Sandwich, saying: "What is this crouching fear of death that possesses one? Instead of making the occasion for a great achievement, a glory. The fact is hidden, as if it were a curse, instead of a blessing, an opportunity to show that the spirit is triumphant over the flesh. When anybody of spiritual achievement is thought to be dying in India, from far and near come friends, relatives, disciples to get the blessing of such a departure from the body -- amazing to see! They believe spirituality is *transmitted*, actually."[2]

Swami Premananda had passed away on July 30, 1918. Then in May of 1920 had come the passing of Swami Adbhutananda, about which Tantine had received a long letter from Swami Turiyananda describing in vivid detail the swami's final samadhi.[3]

Then on July 22, 1920, Sri Sarada Devi also had entered mahasamadhi. Once Tantine asked M. (Mahendranath Gupta) what he could say about the Holy Mother. "What was she to you?" she asked him. He replied: "The same as Sri Ramakrishna, God-incarnate on earth. He and the Holy Mother are one, like 'I and my Father are one.' The Master said, 'Brahman and Shakti are one.'"[4]

It was a time of many losses. On April 5, 1922, Swami Brahmananda had lay dying of cholera. Tantine had written to Lady Sandwich from the Guest House, saying, "I may cable you to help Swami Brahmananda ... by Christian Science[5]." However, within five days he had entered maha-samadhi, and she again wrote to her: "One of the most lovely sights was: the early morning light breaking upon the tiny boat ferrying across the Ganges the body of the monk Swami Brahmanandaji under the yellow silk canopy of his bed, with all the monks in ochre yellow -- the helmsman -- Swami Shankarananda, standing like a sentinel, swaying backwards and forwards, against a big oar."[6]

Tantine considered Swami Turiyananda one of the "greatest saints, worthy of being coupled with [Vivekananda][7]," and in 1922 when he lay on his deathbed at Benares, she hurried from Puri to see him. The swami could only lie on his side. When she saw him, she cried out: "Swamiji! You will be all right soon. You have to carry on the work of Vivekananda." Immediately the swami seemed to forget his suffering and exclaimed: "Yes, yes! Of course!" Tantine stayed only a short while. Before leaving, she gave him one of the beautiful Lalique crystals of Swami Vivekananda, saying to him, "You loved Swamiji very much."[8]

When Swami Turiyananda died on July 21, 1922, Tantine wrote to the Countess of Sandwich: "My beloved Turiyananda has died! Now there are none of *that* stock left! Fire, power and knowledge. He just filled me with courage the few minutes I talked to him in Benares.... It was worth coming to India for that half-hour. He seemed at the *Centre* pouring forth his power[9]." One year later, still vividly impressed with the manner of Swami Turiyananda's passing, Tantine wrote to Lady Sandwich that he had "insisted on sitting bolt upright 'to meet the Messenger, Death'!"[10]

Eight weeks after Turiyananda's death, Tantine wrote to Lady Sandwich from Simla:

I'd like Incarnations to come each generation to revive and inspire humanity in its own divine birthright and outlook; wouldn't you? Perhaps they do come. Certainly I've known one, and it

is they that keep us ‘floating on the warm heart of the Mother,’ as Swamiji put it. If we could learn to float, instead of gripping so hard, we’d save more time and strength for watching and learning. However, I’m not managing this world.
... Doctor [Kanjilal], quite young, came to Benares with me to operate on Swami Turiyananda. Such a fine man!... He told me that in meditation the difficult step was what he called the getting from the electric to the more subtle. If one succeeded, then the gain in spirituality was more evident.... I’ve been reading Patanjali’s Yoga, a long book with commentaries, so appropriate here in the Himalayas.[11]

[1] Sturges Coll., October 26, 1916.
[2] Culme-Seymour Coll., September 4, 1923.
[3] Friends Coll., May 12, 1920.
[4] Dharm Pal Gupta, Life of M. and Sri Sri Ramakrishna Kathamrita, pp. 209-10.
[5] Culme-Seymour Coll., April 4,1922.
[6] Culme-Seymour Coll., November 5, 1923.
[7] Culme-Seymour Coll., September 21, 1922.
[8] Swami Ritajananda, Swami Turiyananda, p. 182.
[9] Culme-Seymour Coll., July1922.
[10] Culme-Seymour Coll., September 4, 1923.
[11] Culme-Seymour Coll., September 21, 1922.

THOROUGHLY MODERN GOPI

Once Tantine chided M., saying: "Well, Mr. M., why don't you ever write about Swamiji? You have only written about Sri Ramakrishna." M. said to her: "The key is in His hand. One day at Cossipore, Swamiji had the transcendental experience by Thakur's grace. Then Thakur [Sri Ramakrishna] remarked: 'I hold the key. The treasure will not be opened until you have finished my work.' So the key rests with Sri Ramakrishna."[1]

Then Tantine asked him, "What was the most outstanding feature of Sri Ramakrishna?" M. answered: "God-consciousness! Not for a single moment did he lose it."[2]

After one of Tantine's visits to M., he accompanied her back to the Guest House, and she showed him the things in her room. She had brought a wooden bed from America and had some lovely French bedding spread over it. She told M., "On this bed Swamiji used to sleep at our house." M. touched and saluted the bed and said, "My hair stands on end touching it." Then Tantine showed him one of the Lalique crystals and said: "Look at this. How beautiful the image of Swamiji is on glass!" She also showed him a picture of Hall's Croft and told him all about the special Prophet's Chamber. Then showing M. some pine needles she had picked up from under the Swami Pine at Green Acre, in Eliot, Maine, she asked him in a choked voice, "Are these not sacred relics of Swamiji?"[3]

M. later told some devotees: "This modern American woman is the image of a devoted gopi. That is why she deserves our reverence."[4]

It is a mark of Tantine's being drawn more and more to Sri Ramakrishna that in the fall of 1923 she encouraged M. to translate all the volumes of the *Kathamrita*. M.'s record in Bengali of his visits to Sri Ramakrishna had, by 1923, been published in four volumes under the title of *Sri Sri Ramakrishna Kathamrita*. (The fifth volume was published in 1932.) And he had translated two volumes into English under the title *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*. Tantine mentioned: "The world will be immensely bene-fitted if all the volumes ... are translated.... Men are so troubled by trials and tribulations these days. When the *Kathamrita* ... penetrates into their minds, they will surely be relieved.... Mr. M.'s speech and writing are brilliant. With the exception of Swamiji, I have not heard any [Indian] speaking such fine English. As literature even, his translation of *The Gospel* is an excellent study."[5]

[1] Swami Nityatmananda, M. The Apostle 3:188.
[2] Swami Nityatmananda, M. The Apostle , p. 189.
[3] Swami Nityatmananda, M. The Apostle , pp. 190-91.
[4] Swami Nityatmananda, M. The Apostle , p. 191.
[5] M. -- The Apostle 4:41-42.

SPACE, SIMPLICITY, FREEDOM

Tantine was awe-struck by the number of devoted young monks who were coming now to dedicate their lives to God and to whom Sri Ramakrishna had come to mean everything. In those days women were allowed to stay on the grounds of Belur Math in the Guest House[1], and to meet with the swamis. A letter written by Swami Atulananda in February 1923 when Tantine and the Fox sisters (Sara and Rebecca) of California were there, gives some idea of the routine women visitors had at that time. He wrote:

Here at the Math [the visiting Western women] meet the swamis very freely. They are treated as sisters, and not at all as strangers, except that they receive a great deal of attention and everyone is putting himself out to make their stay pleasant.... There are swamis visiting them all day. It begins at breakfast and lasts till 9 or 10 PM.... So they hear a great deal about the life of Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother, and Swamiji. Also about religious ideas and stories. Then there are the daily religious ceremonies in the Temple room and the festivals.... I am glad to say that Miss MacLeod gets along very well with [Sara and Rebecca Fox]. She is a live-wire, has strong beliefs and her own decided ways, and has a very generous heart.[2]

Tantine wrote to Lady Sandwich during this period: "Yesterday I saw the Saraswati Puja at the Girls' School, and when hymns were sung to Nivedita tears were in all eyes. The Misses Fox, teachers from California, I like very much. We take our noon dinner together in their rooms in this Guest House. Otherwise our lives are quite apart. They are up at 5:30 to go to meditate in the Chapel, whereas I only get up at 11. I've never been happier here...."[3]

On another occasion she wrote to the Countess of Sandwich about the reverie of an evening on the Ganges waiting half an hour for a ferry: "Such a beautiful poetic half-hour! Lost in the twilight, watching the flickering lights of boats go and come, nobody knowing me, nor I them -- so restful and gentle and all-pervading! I found myself laughing to think that a man called Ramakrishna, whom I had never seen, should be the magnet that had brought me to India, where I loved being! Why?? Sometimes Eternity seems to enfold one! There being no why to that, or anything else -- just Isness!"[4]

Some of the desire for action that Tantine had always lived with was somehow lessened or softened in India. While she may have slept until late morning, there are indications that in India a calm, more meditative mood seemed to arise in Tantine and that she did spend some sort of definite time practising meditation. She was active when it was necessary, in order to help the Math or India in some way, but she countered this activity with solitude and contemplation. In a 1983 article, Swami Jitatmananda described the atmosphere of Belur Math in the 1920s when Tantine was there:

Joe felt the "atmosphere charged with His Presence." One feels an unmistakable holiness and elevation in the atmosphere of Belur even now. How much did she feel in those good old days some sixty years ago, she who was so thoroughly charged with the holiness and power of Vivekananda? Half-a-century ago Belur was a much more unassuming place with no imposing temple that today stands imperiously creating a grand silhouette against the evening sky from the Ganges. The days were much quieter too. Few visitors came to pay visits ... to the serene monastery. The shrine was a simple room on the first [upper] floor with a small verandah for morning and even-ing meditations. Sri Ramakrishna's direct disciples, too, were living to carry on the divine fire through their "unknown" lives.[5]

Tantine also wrote about the luxury of space and the luxury of simplicity, which meant freedom from worry about security, because she had little to lose: "I am living in great luxury and space, quiet on this great river [Ganges]. I never dreamed of such luxury anywhere!... No furniture to take care of, no rugs, pictures, dishes -- only a tea set. That impingement of things is gone! Things to do, to take care of, all melted into thin air. Yet I'm not alone! (That I couldn't bear.) One doesn't have to leave the body to find Heaven."[6]

With the cessation of having *things* around, Tantine's mind began to go inside more and more. However, this was not something she talked about to one and all. For that reason there were people who thought of Tantine as somewhat flighty -- "a flibberty-gibbet" or "a butterfly" as some have put it. Once her good friend Beatrice Cooke said, when seeing Tantine slip into Swamiji's room at Belur, shutting the door behind her: "It made me wonder: What is she thinking and doing there, all alone, with no audience! She is fooling us all, dear Tantine. What a memory for the Math she'll be."[7]

[1] Since 1962, the building which was the Guest House in Tantine's day has been used as the quarters for the President of the Ramakrishna Order. Swami Madhavananda was the first President to use it in that capacity. Visitors today stay in guest accommodations on adjacent property.
[2] Friends Coll.
[3] Culme-Seymour Coll., January 23, 1923.
[4] Culme-Seymour Coll., January 10, 1923.
[5] Swami Jitatmananda, "Jose phine MacLeod -- The Radiant Vivekanandist," VK, May 1983, p. 163. [Hereafter, "Josephine MacLeod. "]
[6] Rems., pp. 244-45.
[7] With the Swamis, p. 292.

THE MANTRA

Though Tantine herself states in her reminiscences that Swami Vivekananda's only instruction to her on meditation had been to repeat the word OM, the late Swami Abhayananda told some devotees that Swamiji had given her a mantra. Marie Louise Burke has recorded in Volume III of *New Discoveries* what the swami said about Tantine's experience with that mantra. She writes:

[Swami Abhayananda said]: Swamiji *himself* gave her a mantra. I heard from her that Swamiji had given her something, and a little later she came to him and said, "Swamiji, I can't do this." And he said, "All right; don't worry." Then many years later when she was staying at Belur Math that mantra began to well up within her without any effort on her part. Every day she would meditate in the early morning, and it would come automatically. This she told me.[1]

Alwina von Keller, another friend of Tantine, also described seeing Tantine in meditation at early dawn at Belur, saying: "To have the privilege of witnessing inadvertently Tantine in meditation was to see an entire personality standing like a sentinel, immovable, on guard. Her soul was then like that of a wonderful animal, attentive to the least motion of the Master -- ...."[2]

In the fall of 1923 Tantine wrote to Lady Sandwich: "Being here on this beloved Ganges is a constant joy. Odd people turn up, some interesting, some not. Days go past without my going to the Math, or hardly seeing any of them, but I know one long prayer and worship service goes on to Ramakrishna as if he were the most beloved of *living* gurus. Day and night thinking of him! His tastes, his likes, his predilections -- absorbing all the love and devotion of these thirty or forty monks. It's the youth and enthusiasm of it all that amazes me. It never grows stale to them."[3]

[1] New Disc., 3:97 fn.

[2] Swami Jitatmananda, "Jose phine MacLeod, VK, May 1983, p. 163.

[3] Culme-Seymour coll., October 4, 1923.

THE MASK

All her life Tantine projected a mixed image. Indeed, many saw her as joyful and vivacious. There were others, however, who saw her as cold, reserved, or haughty. And some believed that in either case she was masking her true feelings. Few people considered her disciplined. Her niece Frances Leggett commented in *Late and Soon* that perhaps it was after Vivekananda's death that Tantine assumed "the mask" that made her in so many ways seem "unreal, inhuman."[1] One wonders if the "Mask" was an extension of her effort at controlled diplomacy. On September 25, 1925, Swami Atulananda wrote about Tantine to Ida Ansell: "[Tantine] was one of Swamiji's most intimate friends, and his best letters are written to her. I think she kept him cheerful, and her vivacity rested him. He seems to be always in her mind. She is very active and ... a character if ever there was one. The [Fox sisters] say she acts on them like a tonic or a fresh breeze. *So I am curious to know what is behind the mask*."[2]
Ida Ansell gave a sample of Tantine's handwriting to an expert in handwriting analysis, and reported the results to a friend in Hollywood who also knew Tantine. The friend remarked: "That handwriting reading is good, I think, of Miss MacLeod. Yes, she is masked all the time. She is all heart, but appears cold and not nearly so clever as she looks when it comes to people and certain types of originality. But a big, big character with good strong impulses."[3]
Swami Atulananda wrote about the handwriting analysis again in January of 1926: "She is masked in this respect: She puts on, or forces herself to be always happy, to see something wonderful in everybody. When she is in sorrow she will appear to be happy anyhow. Also, I believe she is far more spiritual and devotional than she will have people believe.... No one knows anyone. We see only the mask."[4]
Perhaps part of the great freedom Josephine MacLeod had felt with Swami Vivekananda came from the fact that he had not seen any mask. In his presence, a mask of any type would not have been possible nor desired. In his presence perhaps she had seen some of her own Truth, her own real nature. On August 11, 1928 she wrote to the Countess of Sandwich: "We know so little of ourselves, don't we? Our needs? Only a tiny window is opened of ourselves, and we are so surprised at the depths, heights, widths, that have never been fathomed, only *apprehended*. We are really much finer, nobler than we know, and are so often surprised at our own capacity!"[5]

[1] Late and Soon, p. 238.
[2] With the Swamis, p. 283.
[3] Ibid., p. 282.
[4] Ibid., p. 283.
[5] Culme-Seymour Coll., August 11, 1928.

FROM THIEF TO DEVOTEE

Tantine's capacity was certainly tested one night in October of 1923 when a man entered her room at the Guest House. Swami Shivananda was now abbot of the Math, following the passing of Swami Brahmananda. Swami Punyananda was at that time a young monk, and in his reminiscences of Swami Shivananda, he wrote about the incident:

We young monks used to live on the first floor of [the Guest House]. Tantine lived upstairs. One night a thief entered Tantine's room and was trying to pull the necklace [*her Lalique pendant*] from her neck. Tantine cried out, and we immediately ran out of our room and caught the thief as he was running down the steps. I hit him right and left, then tied him with a rope.

In the morning we took him to the veranda of Jnan Maha-raj's room at the Math. In those days Swami Shivananda, after his morning meditation, would walk around the Math compound with a stick in his hand. He was particularly interested in seeing the dairy cows. That day, as usual, he was about to go for his walk. When I told him about the thief he jokingly called out to him, "What did you come here to steal? If each of these boys gave you one hit, you would die." Saying so, he left for his walk.

As he was taking breakfast in his room that morning, Tantine came to him. She said, "Mahapurush Maharaj [Swami

Shivananda], have you heard that a thief entered my room last night? It seems to me that he must be a devotee. Otherwise, there were other things in that room he could have taken. Passing them over, he only tried to take my necklace. As you know there is a locket [reliquary] inside it [*which contained Swami Vivekananda's hair*]. I believe this thief wanted to take that locket. The simple, child-like Mahapurush Maharaj believed it, and immediately he ordered me to give a bath in the Ganges to that thief.

I was in a dilemma. The person I had beaten the night before and tied up with a rope and had planned to haul to the police, now had to be given a bath in the Ganges! I was perplexed, but I had to obey the orders of Mahapurush Maharaj. Swami Shivananda also sent a fancy cloth and chuddar for the thief to put on. The thief took the bath, put on the cloth and chuddar, and then went to bow down to Mahapurush Maharaj.

Mahapurush Maharaj then affectionately asked the thief, "Would you like to be a monk?" I don't remember what the man answered, and I don't know what effect this question had on his life, but the compassion and good wishes of a great soul never fail. Perhaps a transformation took place in that thief's life.[1]

> M. later remarked about Tantine's attitude towards the thief: "What a generous and high attitude Miss MacLeod has!... Blessed lady!"[2]

Sometime later Tantine lost that pendant while she was taking a walk at Mayavati in the Himalayas. At Mayavati there is snow for several months at a stretch, and the pendant lay where it had fallen. Then one day some monks were out searching for a bear. Standing on the spot where the bear had last been seen, they saw a glistening object lying in the impress of the bear's huge footprint. It was Tantine's precious pendant.[3]

[1] Swami Apurvananda, editor, "Swami Punyananda Reminis cences," Shivananda Smriti Sangraha, Pait 3, pp. 43-44.
[2] Swami Nityatmananda, M -The Apostle 3:208.
[3] Pravrajika Prabuddhaprana, Tantine, p. 173.

SCOLDINGS AND MORE SCOLDINGS

Tantine's life on the Ganges at Belur during her many stays there in the 1920s and 1930s seemed like Heaven to her. Energized by her feelings of well-being and by her devotion, she reached out and made efforts in every direction she could to help the Math and to try to instill Vivekananda's ideals in the young monks. She was never reticent to use very forceful language when she knew something needed to be said about the way things were done. If she saw the least sign of waste or carelessness or lack of common sense, she let it be known. The monks appreciated the advice of Tantine, regarding her as their beloved aunt. Indeed Josephine MacLeod had now grown into the role of *Tantine*.

When electric lines were installed in the Guest House, Tantine would not allow them to be turned on for her room, asking bluntly, "Did Swamiji live with electric lights in the Math?" She continued to use simple lanterns. One evening a monk forgot her edict and switched on a light for her. Then, knowing he would be in for a piece of her mind, he hid[1].

Once, many years earlier, in New York City Tantine had been out with some friends looking at a display of Edison's new "lamps." All the rest of the party had enthusiastically ooh-ed and ah-ed, while Tantine had only commented: "But these are, after all, man-made things. They cannot compare to the beauty of a single sunset[2]."

The temple built for Swami Vivekananda was completed in 1923 and dedicated January 28, 1924. At first some temporary steps were used, leading up to the door of the temple. Tantine immediately realized that good permanent steps were needed, for people were having trouble using these stairs, especially in the rain. She later asked a French architect to draw up plans for permanent steps, and her friend, Glen Overton of Michigan, donated the money for their construction[3]. However, the new steps still did not suit her, so through her friend Achsah Brewster she had a drawing made of some steps she liked at the Villa d'Este in Italy, so that they could replace "the stiff, straight, high narrow steps, so unlike Swamiji and his teachings!"[4]

Romain Rolland recorded what Alwina von Keller said about Tantine's reactions at Belur. In his journal he wrote:

Miss MacLeod ... is shocked by [any signs of] lowering the ideal in the Math, and strengthened by the authority that was given her by her long, close association with Vivekananda, she speaks strongly and loudly to the monks.

With cool disdain, she thanks the monks for having the gall to see the denial of the great thoughts of Vivekananda, and they become quiet and humble. Nationalism creeps over them.... The monks gave themselves to gardening because that is the tradition, but because they were not told of what it should consist, they only planted cabbages. Miss MacLeod got them some seeds and cuttings, and it was then all the trouble in the world for them to decide how to use them.[5]

The eminently practical Tantine had sought out good books on gardening and farming from knowledgeable persons, such as her good friend Leonard Elmhirst[6], an authority on land use and founder of the famous Darting-ton Trust Farm in England[7]. In December of 1928 when Tantine went to India she took with her some eyes of a new type of sugar cane with expert directions on how to grow it.[8]

Her value to the young monks of the Ramakrishna Order cannot be overstated. According to Swami Jitatma-nanda, she, of all of Vivekananda's devotees, "breathed Vivekananda to a degree unparalleled by any of his other devotees." The swami has written: "When one of the novices would beg her to speak on Swamiji, she would sometimes burst in vehemence, saying: 'You are not fit to hear of him even now. You are not yet a free nation!' Or sometimes she would claim with a confident self-satisfaction, 'It is we [Western devotees] who have understood Swamiji, and not you.'"[9]

But Tantine, for all her scolding, loved the young monks dearly as Swamiji's spiritual descendants, and felt a great responsibility to try and help them as much as she could. On February 16, 1927 she wrote from the Math to Lady Sandwich in words which tell how firm was her inner conviction on how the Order should raise its monastics. She declared with great conviction: "It takes a *long* time to grow a man or woman or a race! I'm begging them here at the Math to send the young out to beg as Swamiji did, his own food, on foot, walking, learning by actual experience. Swamiji didn't come full-fledged from the sky; he *grew*! And his monks must do the same, or else they will be soft, no fibre or resilience, power of adaptation."[10]

Tantine watched over the young monks, observing them keenly, and gauging their character through their actions. She was very fond of young Swami Nikhilananda who had "such a dear, radiant nature," and Swami Shankarananda. They were on fire with Swamiji's ideas and were *doing* something, as she put it. About the training of the monks in general and about Swami Shankarananda in particular, she wrote:

I watch them here [at the Math] with amazement, the space and time they give to the development of these boys! Swami Shankarananda, about forty, five years with Margot [Sister Nive-dita] and nine with Brahmanandaji, is I think the greatest young monk here: though he is very slow of speech, and of mind too. It is always worth waiting for his conclusion, his summing up. He said today (when I spoke of the young brahmacharin delegated to my service, and of some of his faults and qualities, and of the Math's patience in dealing with all the crude organisms of boys), "One can only remove the weeds, water the plant and let it grow its own life with the karma it has brought with it."[11]

Swami Shankarananda ... is perhaps the outstanding spiritual monk of the Order now -- though several amazing young ones are on the way, in their 20s.... When I want anything done, I go to Shankara.... [He is] perhaps the most all-round educated monk we have....[12]

She was also quite taken with Swami Vijayananda who was one of three monks in whom she saw some resemblance to Swami Vivekananda. Swami Vijayananda had been meditating on Vivekananda since the age of five when he was awarded a photo of the swami for doing the best long jump.[13]

In 1926 Tantine attended the historic, first Ramakrishna Order Convention held at Belur Math and attended by monks from all over the world. In the Convention booklet the presence of Josephine MacLeod and other Western women visitors was mentioned: "Our American sisters sitting on the ground in Indian style and watching with keen interest the proceedings of a Convention of Indian Institutions was indeed a sight disproving the dictum that 'East is East, West is West, and never the twain shall meet.'"[14]

Inspired by the huge Math Convention, she wrote to Lady Sandwich in the fall of that year, saying: "It is Swamiji, bringing back to his race the great sustaining traditions of Hinduism, as *lived* by Ramakrishna, that is the new leaven pervading India and overflowing to the whole world."[15]

Tantine decided that the cows at the Math were not the quality they should be. They didn't give enough milk and looked undernourished. So she asked Theodore Whitmarsh, executor of Frank Leggett's estate, to arrange for buying and shipping some cows to India. Fortunately Theodore Whit-marsh had connections in the business world who knew how to handle such a request and helped him in the complicated process of shipping cows from New York state to Calcutta, and arranging to have them inoculated.[16]

Later, in 1932, Tantine was given two fine bulls, a Guernsey and a Jersey, and these also she had shipped "direct from Brooklyn, New York to Bombay, then to Allahabad to be inoculated, then on to Belur."[17]

[1] Swami Jitatmananda, "Jose phine MacLeod," VK, May 1983, p. 163.

[2] Swami Yogeshananda, letter to author, December 8, 1988, quoting story heard from Swami Nikhilananda.

[3] Note written by Glen Overton, July 17, 1976, courtesy of Vivekananda Vedanta Society (Chicago).

[4]Culme-Seymour Coll., Decem- ber 26, 1935.

[5] Inde, June 1930, pp. 272-73.
[6] Tantine probably met Leonard Elmhirst when he was director of Rural Reconstruction in Bengal 1921-24. In 1925 he founded the Dartington Trust Farm. A self-sufficient community, it became England's first co-educational prep school, featuring besides standard curriculum, applied farming and forestry as well as fine and performing arts.
[7] Elmhirst Coll., August 7, 1927.
[8] Ibid., November 16, 1928.
[9] Swami Jitatmananda, "Jose phine MacLeod," VK, May 1983, p. 162.
[10] Culme-Seymour Coll., February 16, 1927.
[11] Culme-Seymour Coll., June 15, 1922.
[12] Culme-Seymour Coll., October 5, 1927.
[13] Culme-Seymour Coll., October 5, 1927..
[14] Ramakrishna Math Conven tion Souvenir, p. 11.
[15] Culme-Seymour Coll., Novem ber 15, 1926.
[16] Whitmarsh, 1986.
[17] Elmhirst Coll., October 28, 1932.

WORKING CLOTHES

Tantine, when she was with her sister Betty, was a well-dressed, stylish woman. Away from Betty, she wore the simplest and most practical of dresses. Once she wrote from the Guest House: "A cool breeze makes this place perfect, for I am clothed in warm air, literally, instead of dozens of woolens and furs. I do not write to many people how happy I am for fear they would ask to join me, and I do not want any joining up.... I am free, being alone to go to the math at anytime I like. The great Ganges is a living companion, the boatman chanting 'Ram, Ram' or 'Krishna' till the whole atmosphere seems filled with His presence."[1]

But Tantine kept her wardrobe in case those fine dresses and cloaks were needed, and she referred to them as her "working clothes." Swami Vijayananda once told how he learned why she kept her fine clothes. Visiting her room one day, he expressed his surprise that she would have such fine clothes about, dressed as she always was in simple fashion. Looking at him sadly, she said, "To think I should have to explain this to you!" Then a few days later, after several young monks had been thrown into prison by the British on suspicion of espionage, the swami saw Tantine, dressed in some of these fine clothes, getting into a carriage outside the Math. An hour or so later both she and the young monks were all back at the monastery. She had paid a visit to the British governor and had secured their release.[2]

The British Government found that young freedom fighters were carrying the books of Swami Vivekananda. Seeing the phrase *freedom from all bondage* in the books, the Government tried to ban them from sale on the grounds that these books were behind the freedom movement. Tantine always went to the best source for solving problems. She took Swami Saradananda with her to the British Governor, and he explained that the phrase "freedom from all bondage," as mentioned in Swamiji's books, meant final liberation from the cycle of birth and death. After Swami Saradananda had made this clear to the British Governor, there was no more problem about the books[3].

Tantine was Municipal Commissioner of West Bengal[4]. This was probably an honorary title given by the British Government because of her keen interest in India and the frequency of her visits there. On several occasions, Tantine was able to help protect the Math from heavy taxation because of her position. Considering Belur Math to be the personal property of Swami Vivekananda, the Municipality wanted to impose heavy tax, saying that the Math was actually Vivekananda's garden house. There also was a threat of railway line being laid right across the Math's property. Tantine, with all the influence she could summon through her position as Municipal Commissioner, blocked the acquisition process for the railway line, and got Belur Math exempted from taxation. As a result, Belur Math was saved from the hardship of financial taxation forever, with just a nominal payment.[5]

The Empress Josephine, friend and confidante of nobility in London and elsewhere, the respected, elegantly-dressed American woman with connections everywhere, was a role Tantine had to put on now and then. And her fine garments were indeed "working clothes," used for a good purpose as one uses a pen and check to donate money. Swami Vivekananda had said to Tantine, "One cannot renounce what one has not had." And Sister Nivedita had once reminded her of this, writing, "Don't you remember [that Vivekananda also said] you yourself had to be an Empress Josephine before you could be Josephine the Saint?"[6] Now, having had the Empress role and having renounced the Empress role, she could use that empirical air when she needed to, with freedom and dignity, all in Swamiji's cause.

On another occasion, two young men came to tell her that the younger one was about to be interned by police and taken to the village of Haroa, Bengal, until further orders. Tantine, writing about what she had said to them, told the Countess of Sandwich: "I had my chance of telling him what it really meant! And what he might do for India and Swamiji, whose ideal was

that each village of India (over 700,000) should have a centre, one man of education, to recreate the village. I gave him five volumes of Swamiji and told him that 'Mother' had chosen him by the Governor and Council to do Her work.... Darling, to have seen those two brothers' faces change from despair to hope! Eager to begin!..." Then Tantine had told the two brothers that Swami Vivekananda's definition of his own religion was "to learn" and that with that spirit the boy should go into this new village ... to learn the village's needs, to teach sanitation, English, and Vivekananda's ideals, and to live them and lift India![7]

[1] Culme-Seymour Coll., April 24, 1922.
[2] Pravrajika Bhavaprana, "Jose phine MacLeod," VK, June 1989, p. 231.
[3] Swami Sarvadevananda, letter to author, February 19, 1994.
[4] Pravrajika Prabuddhaprana, Tantine, p. 179.
[5] Swami Sarvadevananda, letter to author, February 19, 1994.
[6] Letters SN I, #128, p. 348.
[7] Culme-Seymour Coll., November 27, 1927 [?].

MESSAGE AND MISSION (SWAMIJI UNLIMITED) (Part Two)

"It is the pure in heart that see God, and there is no other religion, said our Swamiji."
-- Letter from Josephine MacLeod to Jeanne Sturges, March 23, 1936.

An important letter written by Tantine -- addressee unknown, gives a good view of her character, her outlook, and the effect Vivekananda had had on her. In this letter lies the undergirding, the basis, of all her work. On March 12, 1923, she wrote from the Belur Math Guest House:

I don't want to be a hero. I want to see them [the monks] sometimes but not always.... Saying 'goodbye' is in itself an exhilaration. Then I like to come back, see the growth, change, deepening, and go off to new flights. The thing that held me in Swamiji was his *unlimitedness!* I never could touch the bottom -- or top -- or sides! The amazing size of him, and I think Nivedita's hold was that too. She was so *cultivated!* yet so sound! Oh, such natures make one so free! It's the reaction on oneself that matters really, isn't it? What one gets out of it.

You ask if I am utterly secure in my grasp on the Ultimate. Yes -- utterly. It seems to be part and parcel of me. It is the "truth" that I saw in Swamiji that has set me "free." One's faults seem so insignificant. Why remember them, when one has the Ocean of Truth to be one's playground? It was to set me free that Swamiji came and that was as much part of his mission as it was to give *renunciation* to Nivedita -- or *unity* to dear Mrs. Sevier. But it is in renunciation that lies India's spiritual gift: and so the worker in and for India (Nivedita) used to say, "I only hear one word ringing through my ears, day and night: Renunciation! Renunciation!" Hence her hold and grip on India and the coming generations.

I haven't any Renunciation! But I've freedom, freedom to see and help India grow. That's my job, and how I love it. To see this group of fiery idealists, burning new paths and outlets from this jungle called life.

... I feel that Swamiji was a rock for us to stand upon -- that was His function in my life. Not worship, nor glory, but a steadiness under one's feet for experiments!... At last I'm free! It is so curious to feel free, not needed anymore in the West, but all my characteristics useful in India. Of course it is very exhilarating and of course I'm much better in health. To find an outlet for one's own nature is Heaven, don't you think so?[1]

Wherever she was, Tantine kept an eye out for reminders of Swamiji. In 1924 a book was published which Tantine immediately connected with him. Written by Bruce Barton, *The Man Nobody Knows* was subtitled, *A Discovery of the Real Jesus*. Tantine saw it as the story of Vivekananda and sent several copies to India for the Belur, Mayavati, and Madras libraries. She also sent copies of Barton's book, *The Book Nobody Knows*. Swami Shivananda, addressing her as Tantine Jayananda, expressed his appreciation in a letter written March 21, 1928:

I have read Bruce Barton's The Man Nobody Knows. Surely it is Swamiji's biography. The stage [of Vivekananda's life] is only laid at India. The same self-confident, sympathetic, vigorous soul -- conscious of his own mission, knows his end, with firm faith in the cause, gathering beneath the standard and enfusing the faith in others, [establishing an] organization for the good of the whole mankind. I agree with you. Those who were fortunate to see him, mix [with] him, cannot come to any other conclusion but to see Swamiji painted in the form [of] Christ throughout the whole book.[2]

[1] Culme-Seymour Coll., March 12, 1923.
[2] Friends Coll.

VIVEKANANDA ROUND TABLE

Tantine was very helpful to India in its movement towards self-rule. In her usual role of facilitator, Tantine would put on her working clothes, meet people, get to know them well enough to ask them in, and then provide the space, the privacy, and the tea, and watch to see "what the Lord had up his sleeve." She had in her room in the Guest House a big round table that had been made from a single log of a 2000-year-old Sequoia[1], and this soon became known as the Vivekananda Round Table. It was large enough for twenty to be seated around it. On December 20, 1924, she wrote to Lady Sandwich about one of these occasions, saying:
Yesterday morning at 7:45 a.m. C.R. Das came to see the Vivekananda Round Table. (Then I learned that he had often been to Ramakrishna and that Swamiji had been his teacher, forty years ago! Swamiji's wonderful voice being what he recalled most vividly.) He came by motor. At 8 a.m. Lord Lytton, Mr. Wilkinson (His Excellency's private secretary) and a fine young policeman, came by the governor's launch, and we all had tea and sat together at the "Round Table." As I was busy with the younger men and serving, I didn't hear much of what H.E. and Mr. Das were saying nor did I care to. But it was all quite friendly and touched upon local matters and I heard Mr. Das say, "It sounds all right on paper, but it cannot be worked." H.E. and staff stayed till 8:50, then left and gave a grand whistle salute from the yacht as they left, to the Round Table. So I waved back. Great fun! Then Mr. Das and I sat for three quarters of an hour and I asked him why he couldn't cooperate with the Governor, since both evidently wanted the same thing, and this is what he answered and what I'm sending to H.E. today.
[Das said]: "The system of government is such that it makes cooperation dishonorable. Cooperation means combination with a view to serving each other's interest. The only cooperation possible under existing circumstances is the subordination of the country's interest to the interest of the governing class, and I include the big European merchants amongst the governing class. I want such a system of government as will recognize the interests of every party. It is only under such a government that such cooperation is possible."
I then said, "What is your suggestion?" and he said, "A Round Table conference." I said, "What names do you suggest?" He said, "B. Chakravarty, Abdul Karim, Dr. Bidhan Roy, Bepin Chandra Pal, Abdul Rashid Khan, C. R. Das -- for all these men have a *status* in the community whereas the two present (Muslim) ministers have none, and are simply office seekers ... then let H.E. appoint the men he wishes." I asked, "Do you want this for India -- *all* India -- or Bengal?" and he said, "I don't care; let it be an All India Round Table, or for Bengal alone."
He then added, "His Excellency's Local Self-Government views and mine are similar. How to shape the provincial Central Governments is the question, but if the Local Self Gov. work is well done, the Provincial Central Gov. will be much simplified."
I then said, "But why not begin now to cooperate since the present Governor is so sympathetic to the principle of self-government?" He said, "Because in two years we may not have a sympathetic governor, and will have to fight the issue out again. We do not want favors granted; we want *principles established* on which we build a future."
I said, "Why not meet here at the Vivekananda Round Table!" He said, "Yes." I said, "Or at Gov. House?" He said, "Yes, anywhere that His Excellency appoints we will come." I said, "Do you object to any of his European ministers now in his Cabinet?" He said, "No, we object to no European. They are Britishers and have a right to represent and fight for their own country and ideals; we want representative Indians to do the same for India."
[On Tantine's note to Lord Lytton she added:] Now you may have known all this, Lord Lytton, before. To me it is quite new! So as My Religion is to learn, I am most grateful to you for coming and thus enlarging the knowing of Your Very Sincere Josephine MacLeod.[2]
One month later Tantine wrote to Lady Sandwich: "Last Friday morning at 11:30 as I was deep in sorting papers, several rushed into my hall to cry, 'The Governor's launch is at the Belur ghat,' including nice Swami Nikhilananda (the young monk I so like, that I met in Bombay last

May, who for years has been going to India Courts and Rajas to collect funds for printing Swamiji in Hindi) and asked me what he could do for me. I said, 'Hide these papers -- and come with me.' So we dashed off to find Lady Lytton there with 6 or 8 including Sir Edwin Luytens, etc. etc. so they all walked back with me and the sights seen, including the dozen Brahmin cooks who were getting ready for the 2,000 to be fed the next day, Swamiji's Birthday.... (Nikhilananda is the only monk I've seen that might 'carry the message' to England.)"[3]

[1] Sturges Coll., to Jeanne Sturges, February 14, 1936.
[2] Culme-Seymour Coll., December 20, 1924.
[3] Ibid., January 20, 1925.

GANDHIJI

Tantine was in India from January of 1926 to March of 1927. In January of 1927 she heard Mahatma Gandhi speak "to thousands and thousands of spellbound Indians" -- and was introduced to him afterwards. "There is no measurement of such men," she later wrote to Lady Sandwich. "Their strength lies in their *unconsciousness*. We lived with One and I know! Hence our strength, power, usefulness."[1] Soon after this, Tantine's Danish friend, Baronesse Wedell, known to Tantine as Ellen Jane Wedell, arrived in India, wanting to meet Gandhi. She travelled with Tantine for forty days, looking for him and later wrote her reminiscences, from which the following information is taken. It is not surprising to learn that, as the Baronesse notes, Tantine always travelled second class in India for a very practical reason: The English travelled first class and Indians travelled third, so second was usually empty. In contrast to their second class accommodations, however, they also visited maharajas known to Tantine, and went on a tiger-shoot with the Maharaja of Alwar. They were guests at one time or other of the Secretary of the Treasury and Lord Lytton. Everywhere they went, they asked about Mahatma Gandhi, but nobody knew where he was.

It was probably when they were guests of the Maharaja of Jawal that Baronesse Wedell asked his aide to send a wire to Gandhi's ashrama in Ahmedabad, asking for an interview. They were within three days of sailing from Bombay. In Bombay, shortly before they were to leave India, she had a hunch to go to Ahmadabad, even though she had not received a reply from Gandhi. Tantine said to her, "But they all tell you that Gandhi is not anywhere near here." The Baronesse said: "Yes, I know, but a long time ago you told me about the man who was ordered by his boss to dig a ditch and was up against solid rock but kept right on digging. His boss came and said, 'Sam, you can't dig through that rock.' 'Maybe not,' Sam said, 'but you told me to dig, so digging belongs to me. *Getting through* belongs to the Lord.'" So Tantine said, "Oh, all right. I'll go with you."

Baronesse Wedell's reminiscence continues:

In the morning, when we arrived at the station, the red carpet was laid out for somebody, and crowds of people were there. "See!" Tantine said. "Never become important. They watch you, and your importance blows up like a balloon -- a mere pinprick will destroy you. Be like water softly flowing -- powerful beyond estimation -- quiet -- rising to all levels --clearing all -- refilling all -- absorbing all, and still retaining its purity."

When we reached Ahmedabad, we took an ox cart and started off for [Gandhi's] Ashrama, which we reached in about an hour. It was surrounded by a plain wooden fence about eight feet high. A boy came out to meet us. I asked, "Is the Mahatma here?" He said: "Yes, he is now having his noonday meal. After that he will see you."

In an hour, the boy came to us and said, "My father will see you now."

We walked through lanes of flowers between small cabins on the verandas of which people were busy spinning *kuda*, the homespun cloth they all wore.

Coming to a slightly larger home, we took off our shoes. In all our travels to temples and holy places, this was the only time I saw Tantine take off her shoes. We went up a few steps and into a room where men were seated in a semi-circle around a slightly raised platform. They all had pads and pencils, taking down whatever the Mahatma said. He sat cross-legged on the platform on a small cushion. I remember, he greeted Tantine and then turned to me and said with closed and uplifted palms: "So you came, my child! I see you received my wire." "No, Mahatma," I replied. "I received no word from you." Then he said: "Ah, well, it does not matter now. I wired you to come today at this hour." [*Gandhi was leaving for Madras the following day.*]

Tantine and he talked for a bit, then she said to me, "Is there anything you want to ask him?" "Yes," I said. "Mahatma, where does one find the truth?" And I recall with what sweetness he

answered me. Pointing to his heart, he said, “Here in one’s own heart.” Then he shook his finger, adding, “Nowhere else, nowhere else!”
Then he wrote it in my diary, which I always carried with me, “One finds the truth in one’s own heart. -- Gandhi”.[2]
According to Tantine, their visit to Gandhi lasted only a few minutes. Writing to the Countess of Sandwich, she gave her impressions:
He is utterly unconscious of himself, his looks, surroundings -- absorbed in his ideas, giving courage, strength, initiative to his people. Full of hope, joy, expectancy -- they fill his whole being.
We sat on the floor, [Ellen Jane] and I, facing him, also on the floor. He wanted us to sit in chairs, but one wanted to get nearer; and then I always love the floor with its space and steadiness, so one can’t fall. [Ellen Jane] asked, “Where shall I find Truth?” and he pointed to his heart and said, “Here, within; it is in no other place.”
I said I’d lived with and seen Swamiji Vivekananda for seven years; he didn’t pay much attention, but said presently: “They are asking me to come to the West. Shall I go?” I said: “No, stay in India. She needs all her strong children at home,” and he seemed pleased.[3]
After their visit with Gandhi, Tantine wrote about it to the Maharaja of Jawal and enclosed a photo of the Belur Guest House. He wrote back to her: “I’m sure Mr. Gandhi’s pleasure must have been greater [than yours], finding in you a friend of India, more devoted and sincere than most of our own people. It’s a fact every Indian ought to be grateful to you for. [The picture] is exceedingly charming, and all the more so for the Tantine sitting inside.”[4]
Once Tantine wrote about Gandhi: “When I was asked in India, ‘Why is America so sympathetic to India?’ I gave as my answer, ‘Because Vivekananda gave his message, India’s message, there 40 years ago.’ I am so proud that 30 years after Swamiji’s death, we’ve a Gandhiji to carry on. Bless him!”[5]
Tantine also had a Lalique crystal pendant made of Gandhi, and when she died it was given to Katherine Whit-marsh. The Lalique of Vivekananda was given to Swami Prabhavananda[6].

[1] Ibid., November 5, 1927.
[2] Ellen Jane Wedell, "E.S.P. Reminiscences of Josephine MacLeod," courtesy of John Schlenck, Vedanta Society of New York.
[3] Culme-Seymour Coll., No vember 5, 1927.
[4] Wedell Coll., September 18, 1927.
[5] Letter to Madeleine Rolland, dated January 26, 1932: Romain Rolland Collection, Bibliotheque national de France.
[6] Whitmarsh, 1986.

THE WILLCOCKS IRRIGATION SCHEME

As mentioned previously, Tantine was the Municipal Commissioner of West Bengal. She was also head of the anti-malaria board[1]. In 1924 Dr. Bentley, Director of Health for Bengal, told Tantine about a Sir William Willcocks, who was an English engineer. Dr. Bentley praised Sir William for his successful irrigation work in Egypt. Immediately Tantine was all enthusiasm about the Willcocks Irrigation Scheme and went to work rallying the support of others to "save Bengal wholesale." Writing to Boshi Sen on June 1, 1924, she said: "I may see Leonard [Elmhirst] and have asked his advice [about] the Bengal irrigation[2]." Leonard Elmhirst, as mentioned previously, was a noted authority on land use and conservation and founder of the famous Dartington Trust Farm in Totnes, England.

However, it is our belief that Tantine did not actually *meet* Sir William Willcocks until *1927*, when she and Baro-nesse Wedell went to Cairo, following their time together in India. Tantine herself later stated that it was only at the younger woman's insistence that the two went to Cairo, and in 1930 she wrote to the Baronesse expressing her gratitude since out of their half-hour visit with Sir William had come some genuine work towards the irrigation of Bengal.[3]

When Tantine met him, Sir William had been in Egypt for seven years studying the pyramids, and he told her about how years earlier he had discovered in Bengal a system of irrigation, probably pre-Christian, which, if renewed, could give back fertility to the land.[4]

Frances Leggett, writing in *Late and Soon*, recorded that in 1942 Tantine told her: "It was because Sir William said to me in Cairo ... that he could not go [to India] because God had spoken to him ... and told him to do this religious work in Egypt that I dared to say, 'I believe in God as much as you do. Forty million people need you in Bengal. This too is a message.' And after a long pause he answered, 'My wife does want to see India again.' Five months later he wrote me that he would go."[5]

Though Tantine had evidently asked Leonard Elmhirst's advice on Bengal irrigation in 1924, she wrote to him in 1927, giving what seems to be an introduction on the particular subject of the Willcocks Irrigation Scheme. She wrote on May 11, 1927: "You know how Dr. Bentley is longing for the overflow waters of Bengal to be utilized or not wasted by flowing into the sea. The one person, an engineer, who believes this to be true is Sir William Willcocks, who has brought more prosperity to Egypt by his [system of irrigation]. Now Sir William has retired and is living in Cairo, preaching.... So I begged him to come and give his expert service to Bengal. He says that side of his life is over but his wife is longing for one more visit to India -- so I'm not without hope."[6]

Sir William went to India in late 1927 or very early 1928, and Swami Shivananda, writing to Tantine on March 1, 1928, told her how impressed he had been with Sir William and his Irrigation Scheme, but warned Tantine: "Most likely the government will not be so bold as [Will-cocks wants it] to be to take up the scheme and abolish the water rate too.... Sir William has left [India] already."[7]

In July of 1928 Tantine again wrote to Leonard Elmhirst, asking: "Have you read Sir William Willcocks' lecture on 'The Restoration of the Ancient Irrigation of Bengal' delivered last winter in Calcutta, after his 2 months' survey when he and Dr. Bentley walked 17 miles across fields to find remnants of five irrigation canals that Sir William says can make Bengal as green & fertile as Egypt? It is the most hopeful thing I have heard of."[8]

In the fall of 1928 Tantine was still hopeful, writing to Leonard Elmhirst: "If we can save Bengal wholesale then our efforts will have a chance. Of course you'll do what you can to further the idea -- keeping public opinion alive. I've sent [a copy of] this Willcocks lecture to the Hoovers [U. S. President and Mrs. Herbert Hoover]."[9]

In May of 1929 Tantine and Lady Isabel Margesson met with Sir Malcolm Watson of the Rose Institute in England. Sir Malcolm had rid the Malay States of malaria and was "keen on the Willcocks Scheme[10]." And the following November when she was back in India, Tantine met with a Professor King in Benares who, though he could not personally help out, did know

of a young Bengali engineer who could, using it as a part of a Young Indian Engineers Research and Experience Project.[11]

It was also suggested to her that Sir William be invited to give some lectures at Calcutta University the following winter. Tantine went to work immediately on the lecture series proposal, which was accepted by Calcutta University. It was arranged that Sir William Willcocks would give five lectures on his irrigation scheme in February of 1930. Writing of this to Leonard Elmhirst in November of 1929, she closed with a behest: "The S.S. President Wilson sails ... Jan. 8th -- the fine, fast ship on which I came -- do come! All of you. Your presence or initiative will give a push now -- to this Willcocks Scheme...."[12]

Tantine was a master at using the power of momentum. She wrote to the Yuvaraj and the Dewan of Mysore, saying that if they wished to take advantage of Sir William's services while he was in India, he could make a survey of Mysore. She wrote a similar letter to her good friend, the Maharani of Cooch Bihar.[13]

On January 7, 1930 Tantine wrote to Baronesse Wedell, saying: "Life is full of details, while I wait for the great event of Sir William Willcocks' arrival with the Elmhirsts on February 3 in Calcutta for a month. On Feb. 8th we are invited to the poet [Rabindranath] Tagore's and to kirtan on anniversary days, where they expect the Governor also. You see, without your desire to see Cairo, none of this would have happened."[14]

After so much time, energy, correspondence, and contacts, including an attempt to get the Rockefeller Foundation interested in the cause, Tantine was able to write to Leonard Elmhirst on August 7, 1930:

I have today rec'd a letter from Dr. G. C. Chatterji with the good news that "You will be glad to know that the policy of the Government as regards the rivers has completely changed since the advent of Sir William Willcocks.... The department has started opening out all the sluices on the left bank of the Damodar & have decided to leave them open throughout the year.... Besides opening out more of the old passages for water will be necessary for this, money help to the people is necessary. Can you help us in any way? Your unseen hands have done so much good. Will you not come forward to give the finishing touch to the noble work of your beloved Bengal which you have begun so well."

So I am sending him 300 rupees -- all the money I have in India....[15]

And in May of 1933, assured that Governor Sir John Anderson and his engineers now knew the value of irrigation in Bengal and were doing everything possible to further it, Tantine went to Ridgely, where she actually contemplated "staying on indefinitely." Writing to Leonard Elmhirst that month, she told about meeting Governor Sir John Anderson, saying that he shook her hand and asked, "Well, are you happy?" "I had to smile," she wrote, "and say Yes!"[16]

Tantine's friend, Alwina von Keller, once wrote:

Her devotion to serving India was focused on the land that had bred Ramakrishna and Vivekananda -- Bengal, land of poets, educators, reformers, scientists, and saints; land of religions and poetic fervour and prophetic vision of what man is and should become. And this Bengal with the majestic sweep of the Ganges: poor, famished, ill, depleted. Tantine's fierce and ardent motherliness was not primarily directed to the personal needs of the individual. They were too numerous to be dealt with singly. She was, however, generous in the extreme when confronted with suffering. I once saw her on Hooghly Bridge, walking lightly and quickly to get to an appointment. Suddenly she halted with an expression of acute pain, turning back to the emaciated heap of bones and sallow skin cowering on the sidewalk, huddled with a baby against the railing so as not to be stepped on by thoughtless pedestrians. Tantine did not open her handbag to give a few coins -- she bent over the woman and drew from the chamois bag hidden in her dress a handful of rupee bills and, shielding the woman from any chance glance of passersby, she gently thrust the money into the folds of the woman's sari. Her face was bitter as she walked on. She knew that money was insufficient, charity inefficient, and that pity would do nothing. Her compassion was on a different scale, and each and every such encounter strengthened her resolution to serve Bengal.[17]

[1] Pravrajika Prabuddhaprana, Tantine, p. 179.
[2] Pravrajika Prabuddhaprana, p. 180.
[3] Wedell Coll., January 7, 1930.
[4] Sturges Coll., to Jeanne Sturges, August 12 [probably 1927).
[5] Late and Soon, p. 242.
[6] Elmhirst Coll., May 11, 1927.
[7] Friends Coll.
[8] Elmhirst Coll., July 17, 1928.
[9] Elmhirst Coll., November 16, 1928.
[10] Elmhirst Coll., May 28, 1929.
[11] Elmhirst Coll., November 6, 1929.
[12] Elmhirst Coll., November 6, 1929.
[13] Elmhirst Coll, undated.
[14] Wedell Coll.
[15] Elmhirst Coll., August 7, 1930.
[16] Elmhirst Coll., May 1933.
[17] Pravrajika Bhavaprana, "Jose phine MacLeod," VK, July 1989, p. 264.

Though generally a happy and contented person, Tantine, particularly through losing Swami Vivekananda, had known what pain was, and she seemed to understand the pain of other people. Always one who valued *doing* something to alleviate misery, she was not content to commiserate; she *suggested resources*. Writing to Karl Whitmarsh from the Guest House in May of 1926 she told him:

All of us have problems, life being but a series of problems, but I've noticed that we are each called upon to face what to each is the most difficult, a sort of test of our strength. As Swamiji puts it, "Tell me what you've suffered and I'll tell you how great you are." One way to solve a problem is to fill yourself with something else. Time itself being a great solvent.

See if you can get ... Laotze, the Simple Way ... and see what peace and serenity it brings making one bigger than any experience -- any problems.... Of course if you'd like the Bhagavad Gita, Mohini Chatterji's is procurable at Brentano's too and with its references to the Bible, a real solvent of the East and West.[1]

Many of her letters to Baronesse Wedell also reflect her genuine concern for others and her ability to relate to their problems. In September of 1927, Tantine wrote to her: "Six months since we left India. What have you got out of it? Learned? I seem to be just beginning to learn. So many currents, snags, inadequacies. If I don't get quite caught, I'm doing something new -- caught or not."[2]

And over the years, Tantine continued to tutor the younger woman in coming to terms with relationships. "What are you working at?" she once wrote. "Nobody is happy who is not using his powers[3]." "Do read carefully the January [1937] *Readers Digest*, 'How to Win Friends.' This answers your inquiry. Learn it by heart. Apply it every hour of your life. We are all self-centered. Everyone is so. But few of us forget ourselves and enjoy the other man as he is, whoever he is, whatever he is, and follow Swamiji's religion 'to learn'."[4]

Other letters to the Baronesse show Tantine's own methods of teaching and charging up others with her own enthusiasm:

In answer to your letter, I hope I can open up the sluices to your own fine nature. I have come to realize that criticizing yourself is your great fault. You can stop it. You can learn to change yourself, your habits, in an instant, if you want to. I don't believe in living too much alone with one's own thoughts. One grows stale. Life becomes tasteless. You need another human being, as I do. Any man will answer as long as he is a human being. Others get their outlook from work, flowers, gardens, books, or meditation, dogs, horses. I go out of my way to smile or talk to some human being daily -- a new human being, not those I know. I always get an uplift that refreshes and sustains me. That is my talent.... Forget yourself -- your body. Just get an insight from somebody else's life and experience.... Swamiji used to say, "Can you bear the burden of this one little life?"[5]

Don't take outside things too seriously, dearest child. You are divine. So is the other person. I love and believe in you completely.[6]

Tantine says, so you can't make friends. It probably means the Lord wants you to meditate more and so get hold of your inner world. When that is once yours, all the outer world falls into its right place. Adjust the microcosm which is within your power to do. The macrocosm must adjust itself to you. See?[7]

Yesterday a fine young Englishman said, "The world is beautiful and sacred is the future." Say this over to yourself daily. The future's not in our hands, but in the Lord's. Let us be ready! The readiness is all, says our Shakespeare.[8]

In later years, after the death of Hollister Sturges, Tantine wrote many letters to his widow, Jeanne, trying to lift her spirits and future outlook. In March of 1936 she wrote: "[Upon your nobility] you can stand and begin a new life, according as it develops and needs you. That is

all there is to life -- to use and to be *used*.... It is the pure in heart that see God -- & there is no other religion, said our Swamiji."[9]

At the dawning of the Second World War Tantine wrote to Jeanne Sturges: "Life is full of expectancy! It is that that gives the zest to life -- isn't it? I'm daily reading my Emerson.... 'The chief value of the new fact (in life) is to enhance the great and constant fact of life -- which can dwarf any & every circumstance.' So Hitler is a new fact in life whom we must include[10]." "I feel full of wonder & happiness -- being identified with *Spirit* instead of the body!"[11]

In the 1920s Tantine had met Margarita Wallman, Viennese-born dancer, choreographer, and opera producer, who was then teaching in Berlin. At that time Margarita Wallman was barely into her twenties. Tantine had such a dramatic effect on her life, that she devoted an entire chapter to her in her autobiography, *Les Balcons du Ciel*. In that book she describes how when they met Tantine had instantly perceived in Margarita intense spiritual aspiration and had also sized up her desperate physical and financial situation. Seizing the reins at once, she had paid off all of Margarita's debts, so that she could leave her enormous school of dance in the hands of four assistants. Then Tantine had whisked her away. Tantine simply wan-ted to share with Margarita that great world which had brought her the blossoming of a higher consciousness. In some excerpts from *Les Balcons du Ciel*, Margarita Wallman writes:

Josephine MacLeod was a fascinating out-of-the-ordinary being who burst into my life and at once captivated me in her wake. This sudden allurement which quickly became transformed into ardent sisterly love can be explained by the inner calm she gave out. She seemed rooted in a world where nothing could disturb her. The intense spirituality that emanated from her gave her the beauty by which I found myself mysteriously drawn.

She was not at all a gloomy priestess. Her cheerfulness was equal to her curiosity for everything and everyone, regardless of how important they were. However, she knew the whole world. Great English aristocrats, American politicians, European chiefs of state, most well known writers and artists of the day, etc. But above all she had known Vivekananda.... And her entire life had been transformed. "Forty six years of bliss," she wrote me once.

For me [Hall's Croft] was a haven where my only rest came when Tantine did not feel well. We would dine by candlelight, in evening dress, as was then the custom in England, and [one time] I had not brought along a floor-length dress. Tantine, who was not in the least concerned about fashion, led me to a storeroom, opened a large trunk, [pulled out a long skirt] and said: "See how pretty this is! Wear this tonight. You will be marvelous." And every day, she would take out some splendid gown fashioned by the great Parisian dressmakers for her wealthy sister.

Sometimes there were visitors at Hall's Croft: the local rector, to whom Tantine seriously suggested divorce for his incompatible married parishioners; Sir Frank Benson, who was at that time the greatest Shakespearian actor; from London, the Prime Minister [Stanley] Baldwin and his wife, she wearing practically an entire garden on her hat; also the Prince of Wales, future King of England and later Duke of Windsor. He came for the inauguration of the new Shakespeare Memorial Theatre. Mahatma Gandhi also came [1930 or 1931] and commented about the large round wooden table in the garden, saying that it would have been perfect for the Round Table Conferences in which he was participating in London.

But the most regular visitor was George Bernard Shaw. When he saw me for the first time on the platform of the train station where Tantine had sent me to meet him, he asked: "To what order do you belong?" "To the Order of Tantine," I retorted with equal dryness. He probably alluded to my favorite outfit that I always wore: in winter, maroon or black; in spring, marine blue or white; and usually a little matching headband.

Tantine who was never hesitant to give millions to help people in trouble was more than delighted when she had the opportunity to save a few cents. One evening at dinner G. B. told us he had found an extraordinary medical doctor in London who had cured him immediately and had not charged any fee. The next day Tantine said to me, "Margaret, tell the chauffeur to get the car ready. We are going to London to consult with this famous doctor."

At the end of the consultation, Dr. Roche asked for twenty guineas (a rather large sum for those times). Tantine did not say a word but hurried me off to the nearest post office. There she filled

out a telegram form which I remember clearly: “Dear G. B. Your body seems to be beyond price. Is mine worth 20 guineas?”

I did not know if it was the humor or the eccentricity of Tantine that attracted and captivated me. It was a more complicated attraction; vast, even beyond my understanding,... Tantine who had never had any children, enveloped me in a warmth beyond ordinary friendship. Truly it was a maternal love. Without imposing any kind of study (for she never proselytized or forced upon anyone the teachings of her Indian friends), she always emphasized, on the contrary, that she remained free and independent in her devotion to their cause. Tantine simply related to me all that she knew about the Bhagavad Gita, the Upanishads, the Ramayana, the wonderful and impressive legends of Shiva and Kali, of Krishna and Radha, of Rama and Sita -- symbolic reminders of the state of humanity from the beginning of time.... She told me about Ramakrishna, Sarada Devi, and above all, Vivekananda.[12]

Margarita Wallman began studying some of the English and French translations of the Vedanta books she found in the Hall’s Croft library, and Tantine also introduced her to some of the young monks of the Ramakrishna Order who had come to the West. She met Swami Nikhilananda whom she describes as “all intelligence.” And she also met Swami Vijayananda, described as “all feeling and love from the heart.” In later years, by coincidence, the Ramakrishna Order sent Swami Vijayananda to establish a center of work in Buenos Aires, just when Margarita Wallman was also working there[13].

Travelling under Tantine’s protective wing, Margarita met many more celebrated people. In Berlin, it was Albert Einstein and Madame Trotski; in Rome, Tatiana Tolstoy, youngest daughter of the famous novelist; also, the Princess Picalomini and the Marquise de Cavaletti; in Paris, it was Emma Calve, and in New York, Mrs. Belmont, past-president of the Metropolitan Opera[14].

Later, in Hollywood, where Margarita was choreographing for the films and Tantine was visiting Swami Prabhavananda, the two of them met Charlie Chaplin, famous silent screen star. Amazingly, Chaplin showed much more interest in Tantine than in the younger and more beautiful Margarita. He seemed attracted by Tantine’s personality and asked, “Are you an actress?” Tantine looked at him, and said, “Thank God, I have no talent whatsoever.” Chaplin was stupefied by her reply.[15]

[1] Friends Coll., May 19, 1926.
[2] Wedell Coll., September 13, 1927.
[3] Wedell Coll., October 9, 1929.
[4] Wedell Coll., January 20, 1937.
[5] Wedell Coll., February 11, 1937.
[6] Wedell Coll., January 29, 1938.
[7] Wedell Coll., June 26, 1937.
[8] Wedell Coll., February 3, 1938.
[9] Sturges Coll., March 23, 1936.
[10] Sturges Coll., December 5, 1938.
[11] Sturges Coll., December 27, 1938.
[12] Margarita Wallman, Les Bal cons du Ciel, pp. 253-55, 257-58.
[13] Margarita Wallman, Les Bal cons du Ciel., pp. 259-60.
[14] Margarita Wallman, Les Bal cons du Ciel., p. 237.
[15] Margarita Wallman, Les Bal cons du Ciel., p. 86.

SISTER CHRISTINE

Tantine always valued those who *did* as opposed to those who merely talked or who did something other than what they were supposed to do. Her underlined reference to Sister Christine's *doing* the work of Vivekananda in a letter written in 1916 from the Girls School leaves one with the impression that she compared the work of the two Sisters -- Nivedita and Christine. Though it had been to Sister Nivedita that Vivekananda had given the charge to establish a school for girls, it had been Sister Christine who had actually managed the whole thing from 1904 and kept it going. The Countess of Sandwich had been sending money to Christine since meeting her in India in 1912, and Tantine wrote a note of gratitude to her niece, saying prophetically, "[Christine] needs to be sheltered a little, then she will be ready for her next stage of ten years' work."[1]

In 1914, as previously mentioned, Sister Christine had gone to America to recoup her poor health, and was then forced to remain there when the First World War broke out[3]. It was to be ten years before she returned to India, a period which she filled by presenting Vedanta and the Hindu epics to appreciative American audiences.

When Sister Christine did return in 1924 she realized immediately that in her long absence management policies of the school had changed to such a degree that she no longer had a place there[3]. With shattered health and no money, she resigned her position and accepted housing from Boshi Sen at 8 Bosepara Lane. It may have been at this time that Tantine also began sending her an annual gift of five hundred dollars[4]. Having full confidence in Sister Christine as a teacher, Tantine also came up with the idea of establishing a Math for women in Almora, with Sister Christine and an Italian friend of Tantine's in charge.[5]

Tantine spent a lot of time with Boshi Sen and Christine, and in September and October of 1926 paid all expenses for them and American artists Earl and Achsah Brewster to stay at Almora.[49] Later Achsah recalled that Tantine had said, "I think Swami loved Christine more than anyone else of us. She needed him and he could give to her more fully than to others. She was the one Western pupil who understood Vedanta best, Swami felt[6]." The following spring of 1927, Tantine told Romain Rolland that though Swamiji had highly appreciated Sister Nivedita's immense intelligence and sincere service, he had at heart had more feeling for Sister Christine. Swamiji had, she said, felt closer to this woman who had known the bitterness of life, having supported her family in Detroit for many years.[7]

Joy in the happiness and spiritual fortune of others is surely a true sign of spirituality in oneself. That Tantine recognized and openly applauded the great love Vivekananda had for Sister Christine shows the nature of Tantine's own great and unconditional love for him. Writing once to Mary Hale, Tantine declared, "No one who has ever been very near Swamiji or Margot is really ever far from me."[8]

Sister Christine's health was very fragile, but she was able to begin writing her memoirs of Swami Vivekananda. She spent most of her remaining years in quiet retreat in Almora, where Boshi Sen had his Vivekananda Laboratory. Gertrude Emerson (later Gertrude Sen) also lived there. In March of 1928 Christine returned to America, and died in a friend's sanitorium in New York City on March 27, 1930.[9]

[1] Culme-Seymour Coll., Febru ary 11, 1913.
[2] Pravrajika Vrajaprana, "A Por trait of Sister Christine," VK, July 1990, p. 258. [Hereafter, "Sister Christine."]
[3] Pravrajika Vrajaprana, "A Por trait of Sister Christine," VK, July 1990, p. 259. [Hereafter, "Sister Christine."] [4] Pravrajika Vrajaprana, "A Portrait of Sister Christine," VK, July 1990, p. 260. [Hereafter, "Sister Christine."].[5] With the Swamis, p. 282.[6] Elmhirst Coll., July 7, 1926.
[7] Pravrajika Vrajaprana, "Sister Christine," VK, August 1989, p. 298.
[8] Inde, May 16, 1927, pp. 209-10.[9] Friends Coll., December 28, 1913.

HOLD ONTO THE POST

Though Tantine treasured the peace and solitude of the Guest House on the Ganges, she had the ability to take leave of it now and then as is revealed in a letter she wrote to the Countess of Sandwich in late January 1925. In this letter she showed her application of Swami Vivekananda's great teaching on detachment, writing: "I again met the Maharani of Burdwan -- the one I so honour for her austerity notwithstanding her great wealth.... It's all a pretty pageant, life just now, and I do enjoy it all -- but deep down knowing that empires pass away -- and only God remains! Get your *Post* (God) as Swamiji says, and then play any game you like; nothing matters but the *Post*."[1]

And so, clutching the post, Tantine could from time to time leave her Heaven on the Ganges, her Empire, which too would pass away, and sail off to other parts of the world, keeping in touch with friends, fledgling Vedanta centres, and family. Once her nephew, Hollister Sturges, described for his mother a whirlwind visit Tantine was paying to his family in America. He wrote:

She is her old self 100%. Reminds me of a combination of an express train, battle attack (bombs, flares, rapid-firing guns et al.) and volcanic earthquake. The world will keep on spinning on its axis at an ever-increasing rate so long as she lives and I guarantee that "the world will keep on spinning on its axis at an ever-increasing rate" for many years to come.

She docked Tuesday at 12:20 and already she has:

1. Attended a meeting of Wm. Breed's businessmen's association.
2. Heard [Dhan Gopal] Mukerji lecture.
3. Had a talk with Theodore and Lillian Whitmarsh.
4. Dined with K-- W-- and wife.
5. Dined with F-- W-- and wife.
6. Dined with me and told me all about you, J--, Margessons, Wilsons, H--, E--, P--, etc. etc., and played casino with my boys, and had heart to heart talks with beloved Nanny and Mary, and well, dearest, I'm just simply dizzy.

She looks awfully well and is in the best of health[2].

Between 1927 and 1930 Tantine's life was filled with travel. In 1927 she spent time at Stratford, then went to Rome in the fall, spending the winter there with Betty[3]. Correspondence indicates the following: In the spring of 1928 she returned to Belur and was there at least during March and April. She spent May in Rome and the summer in Stratford, and by August was back at Belur. She spent the fall in New York, and sailed back to India in December. By May she was in Germany. Again she spent the summer of 1929 in Stratford, but was in Paris in October and sailed again to India in late November. She remained at Belur at least until March 1930. The next four months saw her in Yugoslavia, Lugano, and Berlin.

Culme-Seymour Coll., January 29, 1925.
Culme-Seymour Coll., undated.
Late and Soon, p. 35.

THE SISTERS

Betty Leggett had been unwell. She spent the winter of 1930-31 in Rome, and the spring in Florence. Frances and Hollister both met her there. Then Betty and Joe went to Hall's Croft where they planned to stay just a few weeks[1]. It was Betty's last summer. In *Late and Soon* Frances Leggett described her mother's last days. She wrote:

They were going [one night] to the theatre, she and Joe and friends, who were staying [at Hall's Croft]. Cocktails were waiting in the Music Room, dinner prepared, and Betty in her mauve tea-gown was coming down the stairs, slowly and carefully as was her custom, and, catching her foot suddenly, or slipping, she fell to the bottom. Mrs. Tims [the housekeeper] remembered it so vividly. The calling of the doctor, Miss MacLeod's insistence on dinner proceeding as if nothing had happened; the packing of the guests off to the theatre; the verdict of a broken leg, engagement of a nurse, quick rearrangement of the rooms (they put her in the Blue Room because the bed was high for nursing), and the last phase began. The accident, strangely enough, came as a relief. One of the first things [Betty] said to France when she arrived next day post-haste from London was: "Now I shan't have to go to America!" And though looking, as France thought, rather white and shaken, she was cheerful. After all it was a simple fracture and, the doctor said, only meant being laid up for a few weeks and she would be as sound as ever.

Luckily she was in her own house and with Joe to take charge of things -- Joe, who was always at her best in an emergency, who always met the unexpected with an access of energy and resource. The shock had been awful, but it was over -- and to lie peacefully in bed and not have to make an effort was almost welcome....

The first days of cheer and then the growing weakness, the refusal to eat, the wandering mind -- the nightmares. Her indomitable sister never left her -- but the old invigorating palliatives were useless now. Useless to pretend each day that she was getting better, useless to brace her with false hope and misdirected courage. A dreadful fear had come upon her and no help was near.

France came every day from Boddington, but Joe was in charge. In all practical matters her will was unquestioned -- disguised (one saw, looking back) as what her sister wanted. No specialist was called, no treatment tried; Betty's every whim acceded to -- even if it meant capitulation to a regime of starvation and despair.

Extraordinary efforts were made to divert the sufferer. Processions of visitors (Joe had free reign to ask whom she pleased) from America, from India, from far and wide, and all taken to the invalid's room to rally her. One of Joe's protegees, Margarita Wallman, made to dance for her, another put through his paces on some pet monetary theory. Keep the house full, keep things humming. The situation in thrall to Tantine. Why did France not question it? She was hard put to say -- save that between her mother and aunt, so long an indissoluble caucus in the family, no one ever thought to interfere....[2]

Margarita Wallman, later wrote about her experience of Betty's dying days:

I spent hours at [Betty's] bedside, who, in her delirium murmured: "I see millions of people who are watching your performances and acclaiming you in all languages."

And Tantine in her sorrow smiled at me proudly: "All that the dying say is true; they foretell."

But for me it was a horrifying hallucination. The dying woman, her long reddish hair, spread over her ears, was obsessed with the desire to travel. Tantine said to me: "Take her in your arms. She is so light."

I overcame my fear, and it was in my arms that she "travelled" indeed from room to room in the spacious home... One room was Japan, another Calcutta, a third Ridgely Manor. Indeed, in her long nightgown made of precious lace and ribbons, she was weightless.

Little by little my repulsion for death was replaced by a tenderness for the dying woman. While carrying her, I only felt a glimpse of this world beyond. Between Tantine and me a silent

struggle yielded itself; instinctively she searched for ways to keep her sister here. Would I allow her to compromise her own strengths? Or would I succeed in getting her to stay for me? She refused when all was finished, the condolences of the visitors. “There is no cause to be so sad. [Betty] has simply traversed the threshold of another room.”

In calling me [to Hall’s Croft] during these moments, Tantine had without any doubt wanted to confront me with the great mystery of death, as she had opened for me so many secrets of life.[3]

To return to Frances Leggett’s narrative in Late and Soon:

At last Holl [Hollister Sturges] was sent for [from America]; too late for recognition, but some good sense came with his arrival. He it was who snatched from Joe’s hand the cable to Theodore Whitmarsh (a day or two before the end), saying, “better and better”. What was in Joe’s mind, what in France’s, to let those last weeks be ravaged with insensate optimism?

But the end came at last. On October 1, 1931, the anniversary of her own mother’s death long years before in Chicago, Betty slept peacefully her life away at Stratford.[4]

Once Swami Vivekananda had said of Betty Leggett, “Women who produce and educate children like Mrs. Leggett are doing the world’s great work, not men like me, who stand upon the platform and talk an hour or two -- any fool can do that!”[5]

Betty was cremated and as far as anyone knew her ashes were scattered on the Avon. Tantine, however, held back some of them. It must surely have been her intention to carry them to scatter on the Ganges, but although she went to India five times following Betty’s death, those ashes remained where she had left them -- at Hall’s Croft. Then one day in 1943, lunching in New York with her niece Frances, Tantine suddenly announced: “I kept some of your mother’s ashes. They are in a shagreen box in my room at Stratford.” And France, upon her return to England in 1944, searched for and found the box “... in Joe’s hatbox, in the attic, amongst a lot of rubbish, old ribbons, whatnot, gathered up once in a fit of tidying.... ‘That’s it!’ exclaimed Mrs. Tims, as they came on it together.... And four years later, on a November day, soft and still as it can be in America, France laid the ashes in Frank’s grave in Sleepy Hollow.”[6]

Upon Betty’s death, Tantine insisted that everything in Hall’s Croft be left just as it was. In *Late and Soon*, Frances Leggett described how Tantine at first pictured herself as “another Betty, dispensing hospitality in the same grand manner, herself a kind of family center”:

“My house ...” she insisted, and tried it for a season and then gave up. There were the gas bills to pay and the butcher. It wasn’t enough any longer to lie in bed in the Prophet’s Chamber and talk about God to the housekeeper. There were the meals to see to and servants to engage.... The great limousine remained jacked-up off its garish red wheels in the garage. Tantine couldn’t bring herself to have a chauffeur; she couldn’t imagine taking out a license. [So she had to be taken everywhere by someone.] “My house ...” she said. But the house resisted. Wanting it to be so much the same was not for remembrance, was not for Betty, was for her -- that she might *be* Betty.... The house would have none of it....[7]

In a letter dated October 23, 1939 Tantine indicated that Hall’s Croft had been recently requisitioned by the British government. During the Second World War, it was common for large houses in the countryside to be used for housing soldiers; but whether Hall’s Croft was ever actually used by the government is not known and considered unlikely. A letter she wrote on May 30, 1941 stated that the government had relinquished it, taking over the William and Mary, across from Hall’s Croft[8]. On January 18, 1943, Josephine MacLeod conveyed Hall’s Croft over to the Countess of Sandwich (Alberta). On February 14, 1945, the Countess of Sandwich conveyed it over to her daughter Elizabeth Montagu. Then on November 4, 1949, the Shakes-peare Birthplace Trust purchased Hall’s Croft from Elizabeth Montagu[9]. It remains the property of the Trust, open to visitors.

Tantine and Betty had supported each other all their lives. Tantine’s irrepressible outpouring of ideas, energy and enthusiasm had acted as a buoy, giving courage to Betty. As Frances Leggett wrote, “That [Tantine] was *there*, made all the difference....”[10] Betty had loved Swami Vivekananda and had contributed a great deal to his work. In the spring of 1900, when she raised three hundred dollars in subscriptions to help him establish industrial schools in

India, he had written to her: “I am eternally thankful to you for your kindness. May all blessings follow you and yours forever[11].” And that same spring, when she gave one thousand dollars to Sister Nivedita for her school, Swami Vivekananda had written to Nivedita: “[Mrs. Leggett] has a great part to play in Ramakrishna’s work, whether she knows it or not.”[12]

Swamiji had once written to Joe MacLeod: “You shall be great without the help of any man.” The natural circumstances of her life had aided her in being able to manifest that greatness as a single woman, and two of the most important circumstances were Betty’s marriages. The years when Betty was married to William Sturges had trained Joe in the art of packing off to foreign countries on a moment’s notice, given her long interludes of shipboard time in which to strike up and cultivate new friendships, and provided her with opportunities for seeing and learning about Europe and Europeans. Those years must also have satiated to some extent her desire for worldly pleasures and, through witnessing William Sturges’ financial collapse, given her some of the bitter but healing medicine of detachment.

The years when Betty was married to Frank Leggett had established for Joe a stable and elegant background with which to provide space, privacy, freedom, and relaxation for Swami Vivekananda, and they had also left her with the financial means and social entrees with which to serve his cause. Frugal by nature, Tantine was able to save money by not spending it on herself, and got great joy out of seeing the good it could bring to others. Once she said: “Money is to me such a romance! I never get away from its wonder! That a few dollars *saved* by me through my Scotch economy and thrift can be so startling in its effects.”[13] On another occasion she wrote, “Thrift gives me the joy of spiritually helping, for that is what money does when it saves courage in those I love....”[14]

Between Betty Leggett and Josephine MacLeod, a number of small and large gifts of money came to Belur Math. Betty donated money to build a protective sea wall in front of Swami Vivekananda’s Temple. She also gave five thousand rupees for food[15]. While living, she made a number of major gifts also, and through the money that she left for Tantine, more gifts were made to the monastery.

In 1930 Betty had given twenty thousand dollars to the Math for the Leggett House, which Tantine described as “a pretty villa on a triangular piece of land on the river,” stating that she and Mary Hale had also each given one thousand dollars for it[16]. Tantine also recorded that Betty had given ten thousand dollars to the Math so that Tantine could keep her floor of the Guest House,[17]and that she had left Tantine fifteen thousand dollars upon her death[18]. Writing of Betty’s support in her own life, Tantine told Lady Sandwich: “Wasn’t Betty generous?... No wonder I feel her backing me even now -- not psychically, but [giving me] plain freedom to use my own common sense.”[19]

Immediately upon receiving her inheritance, Tantine donated the first of three major gifts of money to Belur Math. Writing to Lady Sandwich, she once summed them up, tying them to Swami Vivekananda’s prophecy of the future greatness of the monastery. She liked to see the money she gave being used, and once stated, “I’ll have nothing to leave the Math when I die, but give what I wish to now, while living[20].” On May 22, 1941 she wrote to Lady Sandwich:

Yesterday a cablegram arrived from Belur Math, *India College opens July 4th. Inform Tantine*. So Swamiji’s prophecy of 43 years ago is fulfilled that “The spiritual impact that came to Belur will last l,500 years and become a great University; don’t think I imagine it -- *I see it!*”

The Belur Math’s affiliation with the Calcutta University of 10,000 students will now get Swamiji’s man-making education into all these young students.

You see I gave 10,000 rupees (3,500 dollars) to *found* the Sanskrit chair, then 10,000 [rupees] for the cows [dairy farm education], and just as I was leaving India 3 years ago, a third 10,000 [rupees] which they needed before they could begin the affiliation [with Calcutta University].[21]

In 1939, having made these three gifts to help make “another of Swamiji’s dreams Realities,” Tantine wrote to Lady Sandwich on April 25: “I have just sent Swami Omkarananda at the Belur Math the ten thousand rupees for the new University -- for *Cows*! Now, if I die I will

leave no debts and regrets towards the Math. One never knows what a day will bring forth, does one? So don't delay; *today* is the appointed day."[22]

[1]Late and Soon p. 306.
[2]Late and Soon, pp. 306-07, 311.
[3] Margarita Wallman, Les Bal con.s du Ciel, pp. 263-64.
[4] Late and Soon, p. 312.
[5] Culme-Seymour Coll., Febru ary 26, 1913.
[6] Late and Soon, pp. 288, 312. Also, Viscount Margesson, let ter to author, June 14, 1994.
[8] Late and Soon, p. 288.
[7] Culme-Seymour Coll., October 23, 1939, May 30, 1941.
[9] Dr. Robert Beam1an, senior archivist, Shakespeare Birth place Trust, interview with author, February 16, 1998.
[10] Late and Soon, p. 304.
[11] New Disc., 5:235-36.
[12] CW 6:430; also see SNRV, p. 108.
[13] Elmhirst Coll., February 20, 1939.
[14] Culme-Seymour Coll., October 23, 1939.
[15] Culme-Seymour Coll., November 2, 1938.
[16] Culme-Seymour Coll., November 27, 1938.
[17] Culme-Seymour Coll., May 22, 1941.
[18] Culme-Seymour Coll., February 22, 1939.
[19] Culme-Seymour Coll., May 1933.
[20] Culme-Seymour Coll., February 9 [19?], 1939.
[21] Culme-Seymour Coll., also, May 22, 1941.
[22] Culme-Seymour Coll., April 25, 1939.

THE WORK FOR WHICH SHE WAS INTENDED

On June 29, 1913, Tantine had written to Mary Hale: "I am ordering for you today the Third Volume of ... Swamiji's works ... and if you love it as I do you'll order the rest (4 volumes) for yourself, and also the *splendid* new life of Swami just come out. My sister and Alberta and George, who were in India last winter, say that Swami is a living force everywhere there and that Margot is honored from one end of India to the other...."[1]

Perhaps of all the myriad projects Tantine would concern herself with, publication of Vivekananda's works and books about him was her top concern. Not only did she make great effort in this area, but she constantly promoted to her friends the reading of what had been published. Later she was to make many attempts at getting his works on the yogas and *Inspired Talks* translated into other languages.

Before her trip to India in 1915, Tantine had met Dhan Gopal Mukerji, a brilliant young Hindu, then twenty-two, an assistant professor of philosophy at Stanford University in Palo Alto, California. Writing to Alberta from Santa Barbara, California about him in the spring of 1914, Tantine described him as "... a brain and power! Afire with Swamiji whom he never saw."[2]

She later stated that when she first met him, Mukerji had not been interested in Swami Vivekananda, because he worshipped Shankara, the great nondualist. (Perhaps she meant that Mukerji was not interested in the personality of Vivekananda, preferring the impersonal approach.) She had told him that someone had once reproached Vivekananda about bringing forth new ideas, and had told him to repeat "I am Shankara." Then Mukerji had understood and had become very enthusiastic.[3] On June 15, 1914, Tantine wrote to Betty:

I have certainly found here in Mr. Mukerji a new expression of India. Brilliant, strong mind, somehow *my* responsibility to India is suddenly lifted to his shoulders. It's rather curious. As if I had carried Swamiji's burdens (or shall we call it His gift) of India's place in the world of spiritual learning in my heart, til this boy of twenty-three comes along, and now it is for Mr. Mukerji to carry and not I. It's most interesting to watch, how the sense of responsibility has left me!... Our great role is yet to be played. How? Where? I don't know nor really care but we've not lived with and loved Swamiji for nothing. It's bound to work out gloriously; but even if it didn't, knowing Him was worth this and other worlds!...[4]

Two days later she wrote to Alberta Montagu, saying, "I've poured out all my heart of all the wealth that Swamiji poured into me -- on him (Dhan Gopal Mukerji) -- and now my work is done and I feel a curious lightness."[5]

Twelve years later, in 1926, Mukerji's book on Sri Ramakrishna, *The Face of Silence*, was published by E. P. Dutton and Company, and dedicated to Josephine MacLeod and three other people who had "pointed [out for him] the path." One of the earliest works in English on the life of Sri Ramakrishna, the book unfortunately contains many misleading statements and false accounts of the life of the subject. Written in a poetic style, however, it has a certain mystical appeal and was chosen by the League of Nations as one of the forty outstanding books of 1926 for the International Library of Geneva.[6]

Writing to Lady Sandwich about it, Tantine asked her to let Mukerji know that she liked the book, adding, "He does so want our family approval, for of course we are as near to Swamiji as anyone alive."[7]

The Face of Silence may have been full of errors, but it drew Romain Rolland's attention to Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda. The eventual result was publication of two excellent biographies by Rolland. Their remarkable popularity on the European market was the

beginning of a booming interest in Vedanta on that continent. Rolland had been awarded the 1915 Nobel Prize for literature for his *Jean-Christophe*, a novel, and had already written biographies of Beethoven, Michelangelo, Tolstoy, and Gandhi.

In May 1926, inspired by *The Face of Silence*, Rolland invited Dhan Gopal Mukerji to his home, and the young writer put Rolland and his sister, Madeleine, in touch with the Ramakrishna Order. The Order, Rolland recorded in his diary, sent him "through the medium of Miss MacLeod, a whole library of books" on Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda.[8]

It is amazing that Rolland knew no English. His sister would read to him, translating into French the works of Swami Vivekananda and certain studies of Sri Ramakrishna, and out of this reading, Rolland was inspired to write about them.[9]

In addition to having no knowledge of English, Rol-land also knew nothing of India. To quote the pre-eminent religious historian Mercea Eliade, "It was in total ignorance -- of the country, the history, the languages of India, and even of English -- that Rolland wrote the four volumes on Gandhi, Ramakrishna, and Vivekananda!" And she adds, "I believe the case is unique in the history of modern culture."[10]

Sending encouragement to Rolland from Belur in December 1926, Tantine told him: "I spent an hour with M. last week -- his face aglow with the memory and wonder of his days with Ramakrishna. When I asked him -- how you could get the authentic Ramakrishna, he said, 'Only through his reflection, Vivekananda'. [He said,] 'That Ramakrishna was the Sun & too dazzling to look upon, but in Vivekananda the Moon of his reflection, one could get some glimmer of the radiance of R.K.' There is great joy [here] that you mean to write of Rama Krishna." And again, she wrote: "Here in India they say, 'One body could not contain it -- Ramakrishna represents the last 3000 years, Vivekananda the next 3000.'"[11]

In May 1927, Tantine visited Rolland at his home in Villeneuve in Switzerland. After their many conversations, Rolland recorded his impressions of her and his determination to write about Ramakrishna and Vivekananda:

Miss MacLeod is an American, about sixty years old, white hair, tall, slender, wrinkled face, but very vivacious, very intelligent, of curious and ardent spirit. Speaking French well enough with rapidity and volubility, going from one topic to another without stopping. She is rich, elegant. She was acquainted with all those who were interesting or worth knowing: Tagore, Gandhi (whom she saw twenty days before his accident), Aurobindo Ghosh, etc., but above all Vivekananda, who remained her [source of] religious belief and her great devotion.

Nevertheless ... she never went into the mission, as did other Anglo Saxons; she has kept her freedom, and Isuspect that she's mixed up in a feminine playfulness that gives her great pleasure, all the while loving these wonders....

She never denied Vivekananda's self-reliance, and this was understood between her and him although she said she believed in him, and ever since she knew him he saw the divine in her. But she neither maintained nor enlisted herself in the service of this God, nor did she write her thoughts nor her memoirs. She determined herself incapable. She voiced them to others so they could make use of them, and she likes to give her money to this work and to the men of this work, when it is necessary.

She loves to give and take of the spiritual knowledge that she acquired on the path. She is like those insects that take nectar from a flower and transport the regenerating pollen from one flower to another.

I would like to devote a book to [Ramakrishna and Vivekananda] that would make them known to the vast Western populace. Such a task will be long and very difficult. In their wealth of thought there is a multitude of various component parts, the classification of which does not seem to me to have been made in the spirit of order demanded by the intellect and the heart of the West. A portion of these elements has a character more specifically Indian. Another is universal. And it is this one that I have to disentangle.[12]

Writing to Swami Ashokananda on June 28, 1927, Romain Rolland stated:

It is now one year since some pages of Dhan Gopal Mukerji's *The Face of Silence* ... effectually revealed to me the great soul of Sri Ramakrishna, and this beam of light has impelled me to

know more of his life and thought. For several months my sister and I have been reading the books published [on him] which Indian friends have kindly sent to us.
Last month we were visited by Miss MacLeod ... and during the days passed together we talked at length of Swami Vivekananda.
I look upon Swami Vivekananda as a fire of spiritual energy -- and on Sri Ramakrishna as a flower of love. Both radiate God and Life Eternal. The greater genius is Vivekananda, but Sri Ramakrishna is above genius.[14]
On September 21, 1927, Swami Shivananda wrote to "Tan-tine Joyananda" heaping profound praise on her head and stating her role in life. He wrote:
It is thrilling to learn how deeply and truly you succeeded in impressing on [Romain Rolland] one of the greatest master minds of the West, about the greatness of Thakur and Swamiji, specially your success to make him understand that by studying their lives and following their ideals, the world may get a clue to the way out of the present chaos. Know it, it is for this work Swamiji has left you still in the world -- and making you to scour round the world in search of great men. Till everyone of the West be familiar with the lives and teachings of Swamiji and Thakur, you will not get leave to go to join your dearest -- Swami Vivekananda. I wish to be there before you and wait for you to decorate you with the crown of glory.[14]
And he wrote to her again on November 2, 1927: "... I think [Rolland's] work will be a momentous one, and I wish it to be a world's work. West and the East all will be benefitted by it. After all we are all one, if we only knew how to approach each other! All this through you! That is why I always insist that you should keep your 'eye' open."[15]
The result was the publication in 1929 of *The Life of Ramakrishna*, and in 1931, *The Life of Vivekananda and the Universal Gospel*. Both were translated from French to English by E. F. Malcolm-Smith, of Cambridge, and published by the Advaita Ashrama of the Ramakrishna Order. These two books generated a surge of interest in Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Vedanta in Europe. Within seven years, Rolland was recording in his journal: "Jean Herbert, who has travelled in India, tells how great my popularity is there. For the Indians he has seen, France is the country of Romain Rolland. Actually my books have had a great impact in Europe and especially in France[16]." And in 1937, "... Herbert tells me that the whole Ramakrishna Order recognizes that the widespread extension of the thought and the glory of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda is due to my books."[17]
In *The Mirror of Souls*, the famous Dr. Felix Marti-Ibanez wrote of the profound love he had for Rolland's work on Swami Vivekananda. Describing his experience during the Spanish Civil War when he was forced to flee his country, taking only what he could carry, he states: "I chose to take one book. From the thousands of books in the library I had so lovingly built up with my father I selected *The Life and Gospel of Swami Vivekananda* by Romain Rolland. That uniquely magnificent, mystical book inspired me through the years to dedicate my life to the service of others."[18]
Grateful to Romain Rolland for the excellent biography he had written, Tantine wrote to him on April 30, 1929;
I remember Swamiji saying, "Emerson is your deepest American thinker, Walt Whitman your most original." Alas! that all his words were not kept, for Swamiji's insight was so luminous -- never commonplace or heavy. He seemed to find the joy of discovery of something worthwhile where others found merely criticism -- inadequacies. I wonder if that is not one of the characteristics of holiness. But Swamiji's holiness was not gentle but creative, incisive, opening up the real Godhood he knew existed everywhere. I suppose when one is consciously part of the whole one finds it unconsciously.[19]
Tantine met Jean Herbert and his wife, Lizelle Rey-mond, in about 1935, and immediately encouraged Herbert to begin translating Swamiji's four yogas and *Inspired Talks* into French. The following year, on March 30, 1936, a remarkable event occurred. Sri Ramakrishna's One Hundredth Birth Anniversary was commemorated in Paris at a meeting held in the Sorbonne. According to Swami Vidyatmananda, this meeting "was the motivating force of an enthusiasm

which later resulted in the founding of what was later to become the Centre Vedantique Ramakrichna in Paris (now in Gretz), with Swami Siddheswarananda as leader."[20]

Tantine was at that meeting and later wrote about it: "I heard [Professor Paul] Masson Oursel [Orientalist] give his lecture on Swamiji.... Then I spoke 5 minutes in French. Swami Yatiswarananda gave an *excellent* 5 minutes in English. The next day Jean Herbert and I came to Geneva and lunched with Madeleine Rolland at Villeneuve, Romain Rolland coming afterwards for an hour. It seems the Russian Gov. has translated all R.R.'s works into Russian, including RK & V [Rolland's books on Ramakrishna and Vivekananda] -- so 150 million more will read India's latest great prophet! Hurrah!..."[21]

At the meeting at the Sorbonne, it was also announced that Jean Herbert's translation into French of Swami Vivekananda's four yogas and *Inspired Talks* would soon be published.[22]

Tantine had something of the nature of a bloodhound. Once she got the scent, that was it. She never gave up. Many years earlier, she had tried to persuade MacMillan and Company to publish Vivekananda's four yogas and *Inspired Talks*. MacMillan had refused. Undaunted, she had gone through a different door and contacted her friend, Edgar Lee Masters. Then on June 9, 1919, writing from the Swamiji Cottage at Ridgely, she had informed Lady Sandwich: "Edgar Lee Masters has written to MacMillan, '... I believe that spiritual solution of the world depends upon the assimilation of these works.' So without telling me the reason they [MacMillan and Company] have asked me to return Swamiji's books for further consideration!... Isn't life thrilling! And aren't we to play a big part?"[23]

Tantine had also tried in vain to get these same books published in pocket-sized editions so they could easily be carried in one's purse. She loved to hand out little books to friends and new acquaintances. Finally, in 1934, she approached Swami Nikhilananda, head of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre in New York, and he brought them out in small, handsome red-cover editions.[24]

Less than a decade before her death, Tantine was still driven to have Vivekananda's books translated into other languages. Through Boshi Sen, she had met Toni Sussman, a student of Carl Jung, who was devoted to Vivekananda's ideas and who had translated into German some of his books, including *Jnana Yoga*, which were being sold in Switzerland. Tantine had already asked a Mrs. Berliner to translate *Inspired Talks* into German, but asked Toni to edit it and get it published[25]. In July of 1941 Tantine sent Toni the American pocket edition of *Inspired Talks* and asked her to translate it also, saying, "[This edition] sums up Swamiji in a synthetic way."[26]

Toni Sussman also wanted to translate *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* (in seven volumes at that time), and Tantine urged her to do so "while in the grand mood."[27] In addition, Tantine commissioned Eleni Kazantzakis to translate into Greek some of Vivekananda's works. "It is such things that make me feel why I am still living and learning and so well," she wrote to Lady Sandwich. "When I joined the Town Hall Club [in New York City] ... they asked my occupation and I wrote 'To Learn.'"[28]

Tantine maintained her friendship with Emma Calve, and visited the famous singer at her century-old chateau in Aveyron, France in the fall of 1924. Writing to Leonard Elmhirst from Calve's home, Tantine eulogized her friend, saying:

[This chateau was] perhaps never used for nobler purposes than now -- under the influence of dear Madame Calve. Each day her singing class is begun by the girls chanting "Om" -- the word the Indians call God. It isn't only song, music, that these girls are getting but an ideal of character, struggle of purpose, which will abide by them forever, so you see my last days in Europe are full of wonder and gratitude.[29]

Within the next two years a French woman named Drinette Verdier sought out the acquaintance of Tantine and Emma Calve in order to deepen her knowledge of Swami Vivekananda, whom she had never met. Tantine and Madame Verdier became extremely close, and within ten years it had become the driving ambition of Verdier's life to see that the *Complete Works* were translated into French.[30]

In June of 1937 Tantine wrote to Baronesse Wedell from Paris: “Grand things are happening here in Europe. Mrs. Verdier ... just sold all her jewels for 140,000 francs ($6,000) just to pay for the translation and publication of all of Swamiji’s volumes into French[31].” Drinette Verdier then contacted Jean Herbert, and commissioned him for this task which took several years and a number of assistants. Swami Vidyatmananda met Mme. Verdier in 1966, and later commented, “I often think that Mme. Verdier ... was Swamiji’s ‘invention’ by which he was to make his message known in the French he admired so much, in the language he worked so hard to master.”[32]

Tantine’s great tribute to her friendship with Drinette Verdier was the giving to her of the precious reliquary which Rene Lalique had made for her, containing bits of Vivekananda’s hair. Drinette Verdier gave the pendant to Swami Ritajananda before her own death in 1972, and it is now preserved at Belur Math.[33]

An article on the growth of Vedanta in Central Europe, written by Swami Yatiswarananda and published in *Prabuddha Bharata* in 1938, provides an insightful overview of the snowball effect that took place with Romain Rolland’s publications on Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, and it reflects Tantine’s role in the whole process. The article states:

The French translation of the teachings of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda, brought out by Mr. [Jean] Herbert and others, mainly with the help of Miss MacLeod, the great American friend of Swami Vivekananda and the Movement bearing his Master’s name, are fast disseminating the message which was first brought to the French-speaking people through Romain Rolland’s epoch-making works on Ramakrishna-Vivekananda. A field for future activity is thus being prepared, and the time is not far off when a French-speaking swami of the Order will be in great demand for working amongst those drawn towards the teachings. Being informed of the growing interest in France by Monsieur Herbert and others, the authorities of the [Ramakrishna] Order anticipated the future needs. With the financial support given by Miss MacLeod, they sent Swami Siddheswarananda, a well tried and fully qualified worker of the Order, to Paris for getting himself prepared for the work.[34]

Tantine had brought Swami Siddheswarananda to Paris in 1937. At that time he spoke no French. At first the swami had stayed with Monsieur and Madame Sauton, who had read Romain Rolland’s book on Swami Vivekananda, and had heard Tantine and Professor Masson Oursel speak at the Sorbonne in 1936. In January of 1938 Tantine wrote to Baronesse Wedell, saying that the Sautons lived in an apartment “up four flights, no lift, no telephone, no servant,” adding, “I may be a good deal now in Paris since this fine swami of spirituality is to be permanently here.”[35]

Within a year, Tantine was writing to Lady Sandwich that she might help the swami make a Vedanta centre in Paris. She also asked Lady Sandwich to drop a line to the swami’s father, the Prince of Cochin, to let him know how well his son was getting along, adding, “A word from a stranger does help to bridge the distance.”[36]

Eight years later Swami Siddheswarananda sent Tantine a wire, saying: “Addressed largely attended Sorbonne audience. Professors taking initiative for regular Indian Philosophy courses for next session. Affection.” Tantine wrote immediately to Lady Sandwich: “Bless him and you all -- this world belongs to the Lord!”[37]

[1] Friends Coll.
[2] Culme-Seymour Coll., March 5, 1914.
[3] Inde, May 16, 1927, p. 202.
[4] Culme-Seymour Coll., June 15, 1914.
[5] Culme-Seymour Coll., June 17, 1914.
[6] Culme-Seymour Coll., March 15, 1928.
[7] Culme-Seymour Coll., January 15, 1926.
[8] Inde, March 13, 1927, p. 192.
[9] Mircea Eliade, No Souvenirs Joumal, 1957-1969, July 11, 1961, p. 134.
[10] Mircea Eliade, No Souvenirs Joumal, 1957-1969, July 11, 1961, p. 134.
[11] Letters dated December 15, and 27, 1926: Romain Rolland collection, Bibliotheque na

tionale de France.
[12] Inde, June 1927, pp. 212-13.
[13] "Romain Rolland on Rama krishna-Vivekananda An Unpublished Letter," PB, May 1966, p. 204.
[14] Friends Coll.,
[15] Friends Coll.,
[16] Inde, April 3, 1936, pp. 488-89.
[17]Inde,., June 20, 1937, p. 494.
[18] Felix Marti-Ibanez, 1be Mirror of Souls, p. 310.
[19] Romain Rolland Collection, Bibliotheque nationale de France.
[20] Swami Vidyatmananda, "With Swami Vivekananda in Almora," VK, Nov-Dec 1987, p. 483.
[21] Swami Vidyatmananda, "With Swami Vivekananda in Almora," VK, Nov-Dec 1987, p. 483.
[22] Pravrajika Prabuddhaprana, "Josephine MacLeod's Mis sion," Sarnvit, March 1988, p. 7. [Hereafter, "Josephine MacLeod."]
[23] Culme-Seymour Coll., June 9, 1919.
[24] Pravrajika Prabuddhaprana,"Josephine MacLeod," Sarnvit, p. 7.
[25] Culme-Seymour Coll., October 30, 1940; April 4, 1941.
[26] Culme-Seymour Coll, July 21, 1941.
[27] Culme-Seymour Coll, July 28, 1941.
[28] Culme-Seymour Coll., October 30, 1940.
[29] Elmhirst Coll., September 9, 1924.
[30] Swami Vidyatmananda, "The Living Presence: Growing to Know and Love Swami Vivekananda," VK, April 1988, pp. 149-50. [Hereafter, "Living Presence.")
[31] Wedell Coll., June 26, 1937.
[32] Swami Vidyatmananda, "Liv ing Presence," VK, April 1988, p. 150.
[33] Swami Vidyatmananda, "Liv ing Presence," VK, April 1988, pp. 149-50.
[34] Swami Yatiswarananda, "Vedanta Work in Central Europe," PB, April 1938, pp. 197-98.
[35] Wedell Coll., January 29, 1938.
[36] Culme-Seymour Coll., December 7, 1938.
[37] Culme-Seymour Coll., May 21, 1946.

MESSAGE AND MISSION (GREAT ASSETS) (Part Three)

"Courage and faith and joy are what one wants to see scattered fearlessly! To create precedent. For the world is young, and has been waiting aeons for you and me! This is Swamiji's message as I see it. Most people tell one -- why you can't do a thing. Their own lack of physical and mental vitality make the obstacles so evident, they seem to have no strength, or ingenuity or initiative -- to see how to get under or around or over the difficulty."

-- Josephine MacLeod, Letter to Dr. Venketa Rangam, March 25, 1918.[1]

Swami Vivekananda gave two teachings to Tantine which she remembered vividly all her life. First, he taught her, "Always remember, incidentally you are an American and a woman, but always you are a child of God[2]." He also taught her, "Always remember that your greatest assets are that you are an American and a woman[3]." And it was in reference to this second teaching that she remarked about his greatness: "Swamiji didn't try to make me different, and that is perhaps his greatest mission and message. 'Be yourself, [even] if it leads to the devil.'"[4]

For Tantine, however, it was just not enough to *be*. As always, she treasured not just talking but doing. Writing to her sister in October of 1916, she had declared: "I'm going to live to the uttermost & go out looking for more! Swamiji didn't come into my life to deaden it! -- but to give more outlooks & outlets to my life energy! I can't be bottled up -- If we don't play the game together, we'll play it separately, but we must play our own game.... In finding Swamiji I found the key. Now I must use it. That's the reason I was never a disciple. I must use the instrument according to my own judgement, not his. He once said in a letter, "Remember, your greatest asset is that you are an American & a woman." Now that is really all I do claim. No one can deny me that! So now I'm out on the quest to see what can be done with these two simple facts: an American and a woman."[5]

She also said about herself: "I'm born of a daring race, *making* not following precedent[6]," and "I haven't any renunciation, but I've freedom[7]!" Both statements are significant, because Tantine's lifestyle in her later years shows that she had both renunciation and freedom, her freedom coming from her renunciation. She was not bound by convention nor by what others expected her to be or do. She had no use for social style, for "following precedents." She wore old outdated clothing the last few decades of her life and wore it with comfort and for a good purpose: Doing so helped her to save money to give to others. She travelled second class in India; she often travelled third in the United States. In New York she walked or took subways all over the city, when she could have hired cabs. In India she often got along without any servant. At the Barbizon-Plaza Hotel in New York City, she maintained an apartment the size of a ship's cabin, when she could have rented a luxurious suite. "It's so foolish," she said, "to eat up one's patrimony in an expensive hotel, awaiting death. It may be months ... years[8]!" And from her frugality came her freedom to go anywhere on a moment's notice.

Tantine's appearance in these later years of her life reflected this constant state of readiness[9]. While Betty had been alive, she had seen to it that Tantine had at least the appearance of style, fashion, and good taste, and that her clothes were brushed off and pressed regularly. But after Betty's death, Tantine was on her glorious own. Katherine Whitmarsh once recalled that Tantine took one look at the wardrobe trunks Betty had left when she died and said, "Well, now I needn't buy any more clothes." And she had begun with one trunk, wearing the clothing in it over and over again until it was worn out, and had then started in on the second trunk. Some of Betty's old clothes, though exquisite in designer tailoring, were no longer in style, but Tantine didn't care. Her own money was simply never used much on herself. She would spend very little and could be happy with very little. When at last Betty's old clothes

were all gone, Tantine bought the cheapest clothing bargains she could find[10]. The result was later described by Frances Leggett, who wrote:

[Tantine] looked (more often than not) as if she had spent the night in the train -- as indeed she often had, and not in a sleeper either, but stretched out on the seat of some third class carriage. To waste money was anathema to her, and anyway she preferred ... to ride in a day coach rather than a pullman; she liked to lie down when it suited her and for this the seat of a day coach was the acme of comfort.

Moreover, she rested “best on wheels,” she said, and as milk was her staple diet ... her hunger could be easily satisfied at any railroad station. She possessed no hat that had not been slept in, and her long loose leopard skin coat (brought to her by Betty from China and unrecognizable after a few months of such usage) was a familiar sight to those of her family on whom from time to time she would descend for breakfast after one of her global journeys.[11]

Emma Calve once told Tantine: “Your clothes are terrible, Tantine. You don’t have to look like that.” But Tantine paid no attention[12].

[1] "A Soulful Epistle from a Devoted Heart," VK, January 1974, p. 357.
[2] MacLeod recording, July 10, 1943.
[3] Sturges Coll., to Betty Leggett, October 27, 1916.
[4] Inde, May 13 , 1927, p. 193.
[5] Sturges Coll., October 27, 1916.
[6] Pravrajika Bhavaprana, "Josephine MacLeod," VK, July 1989, p. 266.
[7] Culme-Seymour Coll., March 12, 1923.
[8] Ibid., August 11, 1928.
[9] Late and Soon, p. 240.
[10] Whitmarsh, 1988.
[11] Late and Soon, p. 240.
[12] Whitmarsh, 1988.

WHAT IF

Tantine was an eminently practical "What if?" person. What if she woke up on a Saturday morning and wanted to sail somewhere? As she used to say, "I never know when the good Lord may send me to India." She might need money. So around her neck, she kept a small chamois bag tied by a string and tucked inside her dress. In the bag she always kept the equivalent of a thousand dollars in rupees, sterling, lire, and drachmas. At one time she established the habit of taking out this money from the bank on Fridays. If unneeded, she would then re-deposit it on Mondays. But then she had thought, "What if I run across someone else who needs some money?"

Tantine did not like to give help to those who squandered what they had, and once mentioned her own limitation when it came to giving. She said: "By nature I am thrifty. I love saving. I love equally to give away what I have saved. It is all a game, but I don't give to those who are not thrifty. That's my limitation. I let everyone solve his own problems. I solve my own. I want no sympathy."[1]

Sometimes, however, she would take a sudden intuitive fancy to a stranger who looked as if he or she could use a little extra money to get through a difficulty or to gain courage, as she put it, and so she had begun carrying the little money bag with her all the time. In *Late and Soon*, Frances Leggett wrote that her aunt was known to startle complete strangers with a five dollar bill, or even a fifty or a hundred, accompanying the gift with the information that she "honored money[2]." One recipient of a sudden gift like this was Eleanor Wilson, a daughter of President Woodrow Wilson[3]. It is said that after a visit, Tantine handed her a one hundred dollar bill, leaving the young woman to wonder how Tantine could have known that she was having financial difficulties just then. (Tantine introduced Eleanor's sister, Margaret, to Swami Nikhilananda, and she helped edit his translation of *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*.)[4] "Always follow your heart," Vivekananda had told her. "Your first impressions will seldom lead you astray."[5]

Josephine MacLeod.

Cornelius Heijblom
(later, Swami Atulananda).

Swami Ashokananda.

Swami Prabhavananda.

Tantine holding Hollister Sturges III, son of Hollister II and Elizabeth Sturges, at Christening, with Bishop Spence Burton, who officiated. Ridgely, fall 1939.

Barbizon-Plaza Hotel, New York City. Tantine loved her

Tantine in front of the Prophet's Pine at Ridgely, 1939.

Drawing of Lalique Pendant, which hangs in Tantine's room, Ridgely Manor. This may be Rene Lalique's drawing.

Baronesse Wedell, 1967.

Katherine Whitmarsh.

Ridgely: Left to right: Dhan Gopal Mukerji, Frances Leggett, Hollister Sturges.

Tantine in front of Swamiji's Cottage, Ridgely, ca. 1940s.

Tantine at Ridgely, ca. 1940s.

AN ORDINARY WOMAN

Vivekananda had proclaimed to Joe, "You shall be great without the help of any man[1]." And he had taught her to hold to the Self, the Atman, the *post*, and to enjoy her greatest assets, knowing that those assets belonged not to her but to the Lord and that she was only a player in his play. Once she wrote to Lady Sandwich: "Being an ordinary woman (and in that lies my strength) I know how little reading and writing have played in my life. But loving, doing, serving, talking -- are the natural ways of expression to me."[2]

Tantine was comfortable with herself. Though she spent the equivalent of years in the Guest House at Belur, she never tried to Hinduize herself, and stated: "If the finest Hindu and the finest Englishman meet there is no quarrel -- only respect! So let us try to intensify our nationality. Fancy the failure I'd be -- to try to be a Hindu woman[3]!" When Lady Sandwich wrote to her aunt, warning her that what she said sometimes made her sound "anti-English," Tantine shot back: "In fact I am temperamentally anti-little and pro-much.... My attitude in re. to India and England has always been summed up in Swamiji's, 'England has made the roadways by which Indian spirituality will travel; God bless England!'"[4]

After Betty's death in 1931 Tantine was completely on her own, and her life became an even greater whirlwind of activity. Between 1931 and 1939 she made five separate trips to India, each lasting a matter of months. Interspersed with these were stays at the Barbizon-Plaza in New York City, Ridgely Manor, Hall's Croft in England, New Mexico, Buenos Aires, Vienna, London, Paris, and Athens. After her last visit to India in 1939, she stayed for some months in California visiting Swami Prabhavananda in Hollywood and Swami Ashokananda in San Francisco.

The MacLeod legacy of wanderlust had been carried with her from childhood and nurtured by circumstance. Her planless way of living, dashing about all over the world, seems to have become even more intense in the 1920s and 1930s, and it was only her failing physical frame -- along with the Second World War -- that lessened her travels in the 1940s. Still, within a year of her death she managed to make two round-trip crossings of the Atlantic.

Wherever Tantine was physically, her heart never left India and the Math and the work. She carried her mission with her until death, and always inspired others with her memories of Swami Vivekananda. Sister Christine once mentioned in a letter to her: "Will Levington Comfort [an American novelist and devotee], once told me that everyone connected with Swamiji whom he had ever known had a glow. You always have it[5]." And Katherine Whitmarsh remarked, "Tantine lived what she believed, which few people do."[6]

Alwina von Keller once said of Tantine: "At first glance she could be taken for a society woman. She sought, found, and liked people who were in power -- men and women of title, office or wealth. But that would be the mistaken glance of indiscriminating people by casual observation, who took her for a woman of social ambition.... She sought and used people who might be of use, for the aim of her life was dedicated to that end. Her sense of personal integrity and value prompted the selection of any one man or woman whom she considered instrumental to assist her. And her mission was always Service to Mother India, the land of birth of her Master, Vivekananda."[7]

Lillian Montgomery, who had attended five of Swami Vivekananda's lectures in New York in June of 1900, met Tantine in 1944, and the two shared their recollections of the great swami.

Lillian Montgomery's reminiscences of hearing Vivekananda speak may indicate for us some of what Josephine MacLeod had experienced. Following are excerpts from a talk on Vivekananda which she gave at the Vedanta Society of New York in 1955:

I sat on the front seat so I wouldn't miss anything, and Swami entered [the rostrum area] by a side door. Immediately I knew that there was something extraordinary about him. He was very unassuming, very calm, and took his place. But there was something about that presence that you couldn't take your eyes off of him, and he fascinated you. And as he sat in his chair, his

head was the most perfect I had ever seen, and it was perfectly poised, and power seemed to emanate from him. I was fascinated! And *he looked like a living Buddha*....

As he rose to speak, his voice was extraordinary. It was mellow, resonant, but of great purity. And as he spoke, veils just seemed to fall from your eyes, because he gave you an entirely different impression of personality. He gave you an entirely different impression of the relationship of the individual to the Divinity. And I remember that as I looked at him it seemed to me there was an ocean of Consciousness back of him and that in some way there was *no limit to his personality*. His awareness was in a vision within. As we see people, we see them limited because their awareness is entirely connected with the body. When Swami Vivekananda spoke that ocean of Consciousness just focused and flowed through his words.

I heard him say, "Blessed are the pure in heart." And as he spoke, the purity of that personality was so great it just seemed that divinity was reflected in it. It was as if his mind was a limpid lake that was reflecting divine light.... Every word he spoke was a revelation because he brought with it the realization that he was living. Other people speak from the standpoint of faith -- faith in a divinity. But I began to realize that this man was speaking from something he was living, that every word that he spoke came from a state of realization, such a realization as the ordinary person cannot imagine![8]

Tantine gave Lillian Montgomery a Lalique crystal of Vivekananda, saying that of all the devotees she had ever met, Lillian's impression of Vivekananda was most like her own. "I felt as if it were I talking," Tantine wrote. "Her experience was so similar[9]." One remembers Tantine's own words: "*The thing that held me in Swamiji was his unlimitedness. I never could touch the bottom -- or top -- or sides*[10]." Lillian Montgomery later remarked about Tantine: "Though she didn't seem able to explain what she had seen [in Vivekananda], I always had the feeling that she realized his presence every minute of the time."[11]

[1] CW 5:162-63.
[2] Culme-Seymour Coll., May 1, 1923.
[3] Pravrajika Bhavaprana, "Jose phine MacLeod," VK, July 1989, p. 265.
[4] Culme-Seymour Coll., Febru ary 3, 1922.
[5] Swami Jitatmananda, "Jose phine MacLeod -- The Radiant Vivekanandist," VK, April 1983, p. 133. [Hereafter, "Josephine MacLeod. ")
[6] Whitmarsh, 1988.
[7] Swami Jitatmananda, "Jose phine MacLeod," VK, April 1983, p. 131.
[8] Lillian Montgomery, audio recorded reminiscences of Vivekananda, Vedanta society of New York, April 22, 1955, archives, Vedanta Society of Kansas City.
[9] Culme-Seymour Coll., June 9, 1944.
[10] Rems., p. 244.
[11] Lilliam Montgomery. See note #30.

In December 1915, writing from India to a friend, Tantine had said, "My people in England are all well, and I am not needed...."[1]. Again in November of 1916, she had written to Betty and Lady Sandwich, asking them for confirmation that she could feel free to do as she pleased and stay in India for a while longer. Part of her feeling of freedom and daring-do depended upon knowing that her family did not need her at a particular time. When they did need her, she was on the spot immediately. A study of her correspondence shows that she also spent time with Hollister's children, especially when either he or his wife, Jeanne, had to be out of town, and that she spent some time with the Montagu children, especially when they could come to her at Stratford.

Tantine considered Betty's children hers; and several months after Frances married in the spring of 1916, Tantine wrote to Betty from India, encouraging her to taste her freedom. "Let's fill our hearts with things & people who do love us," she wrote. "Perhaps if people clung to us too much we wouldn't have the freedom & strength to try the new game that is certainly opening up to us! All our children married happily -- settled beautifully -- full of their own activities & needs & capabilities -- gives us a perfectly free world, either together or separately to enjoy or work in or die in -- probably all three...."[2]

It is probable that after Betty's death in 1931, Tantine's visits to family became short and infrequent. Descending on somebody's guest room for a weekend or ten days, and then leaving on a sudden impulse to visit someone on the other side of the globe, did not create a picture of stability in the minds of those children who happened to be on the spot at the time. Perhaps there were many times when Tantine's sudden fancy took her to pay a visit to great-nieces and -nephews, only to find that they were away at school or on holiday somewhere. There are some disadvantages to "planless living." Several members of Tantine's family have kindly shared their personal reminiscences of her for this biography, and these follow.

Gay Margesson (now Lady Charteris of Amisfield), the daughter of David Margesson (later, 1st Viscount Marges-son; son of Sir Mortimer and Lady Isabel Margesson) and of Frances Leggett, (daughter of Francis Leggett and Besse MacLeod Leggett), was born in 1919. She was twelve years old when her grandmother Betty Leggett died, and thirty when her great-aunt Josephine MacLeod died.

Her husband, Lieut.-Col. Martin Charteris (now Lord Charteris of Amisfield), was Princess Elizabeth's Private Secretary from 1950 to 1952; Queen Elizabeth's Assistant Private Secretary from 1952 to 1972; and the Queen's Private Secretary from 1972 to 1977. After retirement from the Queen's service, he was appointed Provost of Eton College, 1978 to 1991.

Lady Charteris writes:

Josephine MacLeod was a great-aunt, and as I knew her only as a child, she appeared to me always an old lady. She was always known in the family as Tantine (little aunt), a name I understood she had given to herself at some point for the younger generation to use.

In the family (both my own and our cousins, the Monta-gus) she had the reputation for eccentricity. She was always travelling and then arriving or leaving a place quite unexpectedly. She would also give out a philosophic belief without relevance in the middle of a conversation. She was not good with children. She was always giving us books to read which were far above our heads, and she was no "fun." My mother always said that Tantine was so high-minded she considered any time spent purely in enjoyment (social life, playing games, etc.) frivolous and a waste of time. So my impression of her, at the age I then was, was not a particularly happy one.

However, there was another side to all this, and since growing up, and after talking with my mother, I get the strong impression that there was a very big difference between Josephine MacLeod (the young woman) and Tantine (the older one). Josephine was clearly very attractive

and I believe many men wanted to marry her, though she always refused, saying she did not want to be tied down. I think she was to many men a real *femme inspiratrice*. She was very intuitive and passionately interested in and receptive to creative ideas. Her many, many friends, both men and women, were outstanding people with new and creative ideas, and they loved and admired her enormously. I believe Tantine helped young artists when she wanted to and had money.

But I have always found it rather difficult to reconcile the picture of the attractive, inspiring young woman who had so many interesting friends with the Tantine I remember, though of course both are true.

I never heard that she had any formal education, and possibly this was one of her troubles. My mother always said that her lack of training for her mind prevented her from channelling her ideas effectively. She was so genuinely spiritual, but as we know, all religions are based on a bedrock of discipline, and she never had to submit to this, either in the training of her mind nor in the way she lived her life. In a way "freedom" and "inspiration" were ends in themselves, not to be restricted by the mundane things of this world (unlike Sister Nivedita's case). She always kept quite a lot of money on her in case she wanted to set off somewhere when the banks were closed.

One thing is certain. She had the capacity to recognize the greatness of Swami Vivekananda. He was her shining star. Through her, all the family have some slight knowledge of his teachings, however small[3].

Francis (Frank) Margesson (now Viscount Margesson), the son of David Margesson (later, 1st Viscount Margesson; son of Sir Mortimer and Lady Isabel Margesson) and of Frances Leggett, (daughter of Francis H. Leggett and Besse MacLeod Leggett), was born in 1922. He was nine years old when his grandmother Betty Leggett died in 1931, and twenty-seven when his great-aunt, Josephine MacLeod, died in 1949.

Before going to a boarding school, he received lessons at home in the schoolroom organized by his mother, France Margesson, under the direction of Marjorie Strachey (a sister of the author, Lytton Strachey). He subsequently went to Eton College and to Oxford University.

His father was Secretary of State for War in Churchill's wartime cabinet, and was made a Peer in 1942. On his death in 1965, Frank succeeded to his father's title and to his seat in the House of Lords. In 1977, when his mother, France Leggett, died, he assumed the ownership and with his wife, Helena, the management of the Ridgely property bought by his American grandfather in 1892.

Ridgely, which became Vivekananda Retreat, Ridgely, in 1997, has been his permanent home since 1964 when he joined the staff of the British Consulate-General in New York.

He writes:

I have very few first-hand impressions of Tantine. For my sisters and me, she was always a distant figure. She saw much more of my Aunt Berta and the Montagu children than she did of us and of Hollister Sturges' family in America. She had more influence on their lives -- how much I do not know -- than on ours, on which she really had none. I do not remember her staying with us, as I think she did fairly often with the Sandwiches at Hinchingbrooke.

There was always a family bond between Tantine and my mother, but not a strong personal one. Reading of my mother's childhood [in *Late and Soon*], how could there be?

I, of course, only remember her and remember her being talked about when she was already over seventy, and therefore, elderly; also eccentric, by that time, and not really taken seriously by the children in the family.

Some of her characteristics: She was quite unpretentious -- no hypocrisy, no false piety, no sermonizing. She never made any claim to being a knowledgeable disciple or font of Vedantic wisdom. But, to a child, she was quite unmaternal, with no apparent understanding of children (so one instinctively felt). We were protected from her unpredictable notions by my mother, I expect! They could have been frightening, (again instinctively felt), without that protection. Was it she one day at lunch, when my parents were away, who said we could have

nothing to eat unless we asked for it in French? Some adult laid down this rule; it could have been she, but I am not sure that it was.

As *Late and Soon* makes clear, she was really non-intellectual, not a thinker or a reader; content with getting "the gist" of the matter. I have for long felt that for such a remarkable man as Swamiji to think so highly of her, there *must* have been more to her than was apparent to the rest of the world, at least in the last forty years of her life. There had to be.

She was clearly willful -- very, and independent with a strong will, and she was apparently quite ignorant of and unpractised in any exercise of self-examination from a psychological standpoint. She also clearly, but unawares, used the "gist" of Swamiji's sayings to suit her own purpose in the way she lived. This too *Late and Soon* makes clear. She interpreted the concept of non-attachment and the pursuit of knowledge in her own very personal way. It is also interesting to reflect how much my grandfather [Francis Leggett] admired her grasp of the practical, everyday details of running a house, yet, when thirty years later the house in Stratford [Hall's Croft] became hers on Betty's death, she had no interest in keeping it for herself[4].

Lady Elizabeth Montagu, the younger daughter of the 9th Earl of Sandwich and the Countess of Sandwich (nee Alberta Sturges), was born in 1917. She was fourteen years old when her grandmother Betty Leggett died, and thirty-two when her great-aunt Josephine MacLeod died. Hinchingbrook, in England, was her home, but her childhood years were spent mainly with her Margesson cousins. Her aunt, Frances Margesson, had organized a private schoolroom in her home, and she and other children studied there under the direction of Marjorie Strachey. Lady Elizabeth Montagu writes:

I believe my grandmother and great-aunt had private education, but neither of them went to a university. I always called my grandmother's sister Tantine, believing it to mean "little aunt." I rarely saw Tantine as a child, as she travelled a great deal with my grandmother. My mother was devoted to her, and there are in the family archives a great many letters which passed between them[5].

Sir Michael Culme-Seymour Bt, married Lady Faith Nesbitt (nee Montagu) in 1948. Lady Faith was the daughter of the 9th Earl of Sandwich and the Countess of Sandwich (nee Alberta Sturges). Sir Michael knew Tantine only briefly before her death, but he has shared some of his late wife's reminiscences, and then some of his own. *Gemma Nesbitt,* daughter of Lady Faith by her previous marriage, writes on behalf of Sir Michael:

Michael wants to stress his delight in Tantine's tough obstinacy through two anecdotes. Tantine and my mother, Faith, were living in the brothel area [or Red Light District] of Berlin. Tantine insisted on having a red lampshade in the window, so the doorbell was rung incessantly. Faith's job was to answer the bell and deny that Tantine housed prostitutes. Tantine wasn't going to change her lampshade just to suit any man's convenience!

The second story concerns [one time] when Tantine was proposed to. Apparently a man hid behind a sofa in her drawing room. She didn't know he was there, and suddenly he jumped up and said, "Will you marry me?" She asked, "Will you allow me complete freedom?" He said: "Certainly not. I want you to be ..." (and he went on and on in typical Nineteenth Century terms). Then she said, "No, go away."[6]

Sir Michael writes:

I never knew Tantine herself (and indeed knew little of Vivekananda either) until my marriage to Faith early in 1948. Tantine was ninety then but came unhesitatingly from America to our wedding in England, returning to New York immediately after. She came to England again before she died and made me burrow in the voluminous black gown which she always wore for the present she had brought specially for our wedding. It was a $50 note and most welcome, hidden inside the hem somewhere in the back of her dress.

She was really no longer herself mentally then, and getting into all sorts of difficulties, but still forceful and very kind. Faith had lived with Tantine for several years when she was a young woman, and she got to know her well and was always deeply grateful to her. She admired Tantine's independence and strength of character, and of course learned much of Vivekananda

and something of the Vedanta teachings. But I don't think they really had very much in common. Tantine was not a mother figure: more a powerful nanny-in-charge.

About 1953 Faith and I travelled in India for six months. Our interest in the Indian teachings and philosophy was already awake, and our primary objective was to understand them further, so of course we went to the Ramakrishna centre in each city that we visited. Whenever we did so, Faith was received and welcomed almost as a saint, not just because she was the great-niece of Tantine but because she had lived with her; therefore she had received her grace and should be worshipped. I followed behind, always greatly moved.[7]

Elizabeth Sturges, the widow of Hollister Sturges II, elder son of Hollister and Jeanne Sturges, and a great-nephew of Josephine MacLeod, writes:

I met Hollister II when I was twenty years old, living in Kingston, New York. Hollister, age 25, also lived there and published a local newspaper. I was an editor for him. We married in 1938. For our honeymoon, we sailed on *the Maura-tania* to England to stay at Hall's Croft with Tantine. On the ship we made friends with four young men who were celebrating a college reunion. At Hall's Croft one day they appeared at the door and Tantine invited them in. Thereafter, every day she invited them for sightseeing, lunch, and dinner.

From the beginning of our marriage all our summers were spent at "Fairfield," the family home in Stone Ridge, New York. [Fairfield is also known as the Big Cottage at Ridgely.] All the family were there each summer: his parents, Hollister and Jeanne Sturges, his sister, Betty, and her daughter, (and later our three children). Tantine loved children! She moved from Swamiji's Cottage [at Ridgely] to Fairfield. That is when I really got to know (and love) her.

In 1939 Hollister and I moved to an apartment in New York City and lived there after summer vacation. Tantine lived at the Barbizon-Plaza Hotel. We kept in close touch with her and were there when she needed us, which was often. Her health was slowly fading. However, we loved being with her -- having long talks about religion, the family, her travels, etc. She was a charming, generous, great lady.

For many years she invited herself every Sunday morning for breakfast with us, always with a beautiful plant for me and 25 cents for each of our three children and guest children -- a ceremonious gift. They were delighted and very young and felt rich!

In later years when she was not very well, her doctor gave her an assortment of pills to be taken every two, three, or four hours daily. Tantine would swallow all of them at once, every morning before breakfast! Despite our protests, this went on for three or four years. It seemed to do some good however.

One day while we were with her in her hotel she looked at Hollister's shoes and said: "Come. We must go down to the shoemaker. Those shoes need attention. They need polish." The shoemaker was on Sixth Avenue. She seated herself in the chair and had her own shoes polished first. The chair jiggled up and down and back and forth as her shoes were worked on. As she sat there being jiggled, she said, "See what fun it is and what a good job he's doing." Then she said: "Come, Hollister. It's your turn." So up and down he jiggled while the man polished his shoes. It was a hilarious sight.

Another time while we were with her, she asked us about our finances. "Are you in debt?" she asked. We were. "How much?" she asked. "Be accurate!" We couldn't lie and told her "$2,125.96." She immediately made out a check for the complete sum and insisted on giving it to us. We were young then and newly married. We protested to no avail -- but were relieved and happy too.

When our son, Hollister III, was born in 1939 in Kingston, New York, Tantine immediately called us and said she would come up within the week. She did come and said, "He must be baptised now, today, or he will never get to Heaven."

Tantine introduced Hollister and me to many friends and followers of the *Bhagavad Gita*. Among them was the Danish Baronesse, Ellen Jane Wedell Wedellsborg, who later (at Tantine's suggestion) became godmother to our daughter, Abigail.

Tantine also arranged for Swamis Satprakashananda and Nikhilananda to stay in the Swamiji Cottage at Ridgely for two summers. We were staying at Fairfield on the same property, and the two swamis frequently visited us[8].

Magdalena Sturges, the widow of Paul Sturges, the younger son of Hollister and Jeanne Sturges and a great-nephew of Josephine MacLeod, writes:

My first impression of Tantine was of a very austere lady who knew exactly who she was and knew her place in the universe. She believed in and quoted and lived Swami Vivekananda, whom she called Swamiji.

I remember her taking my husband and me out to lunch in New York on a Sunday. The traffic wasn't too heavy but it was there. She took off across 57th Street with her hand held up in the air like a ship in full sail. The traffic stopped and of course we trailed after her. She took us to the Barbizon-Plaza to see her room on the 18th floor. She showed us the little hotele cut into the hall door where they deposited her breakfast every morning. She was proud of her very few needs and the fact that this small room contained all that she needed.

She loved my husband and called him Paulo. She felt she could call on him anytime and he would come. She came to Stone Ridge when we were living in the Swamiji Cottage. She was planning to go to California and wanted to say goodbye to her Ridgely and Stone Ridge. We had lunch and Paul drove her to all the places in the area that she wanted to have a last look at. Then she said, "Now take me back to New York." This was all in a matter of five hours or so. She had boundless energy and a greed for knowledge. This episode must have taken place in the spring of 1947.

She was also very caring of her family and very generous. It was probably in 1943 that she was staying at Ridgely with just Tom Grier to take care of her. She asked me to tea so she could get to know the person her Paulo had married. She wanted to know if I loved him. At the end of the visit she reached into her dress at the neck and pulled out a pouch and handed me some money without counting it. Later I found she had given me seven hundred dollars[9].

Pamela Whitmarsh Gores, niece of the late Katherine Whitmarsh, who was the great-niece of Frank Leggett, writes:

Tantine was very frugal, especially about clothes, and she admired elegant materials. As she had many dresses of her sister's she wore those of a bygone era. When I remarked to her once that her costumes were a bit ornate and out of style, she replied that Vivekananda wanted her to look her best, and one's best meant one's best materials.

At the end of her life she confused Swami Prabhavananda with Vivekananda. When I mentioned that they were two different people, she said, "Not really," and was delighted to be in the company of both.

Paul Sturges took comfort in the fact that Tantine had promised him that at the end of his life she and Vivekananda would come for him. I learned after his death that a Vedantist nurse had been with him when he died, and somehow I feel that was Tantine's doing. She loved Paul very much, and he was a great favorite of hers.

My husband, who is an architect and an admirer of Frank Lloyd Wright, and I visited Taliesin East many years ago. When I mentioned that Tantine had spoken of Frank Lloyd Wright with affection, we immediately received Red Carpet treatment, as it was well known there that Frank Lloyd Wright was deeply and favorably impressed by Tantine[10].

[1] Friends Coll., to Ma1y Ha le , December 4, 1915 . Advaita Ashrama , 19 93), by pp. 154-55.

[2] Sturges Coll., December 19. 56. Inde , April 3, 1936, p. 488. ,, 1916.[3] Letter to a uthor , November 29, 1988.[4] Letter to auth or, June 29, 1987

.[5] Letter to author, December 1, 1988.[6] Letter to author , February 3, 1 993.[7] Letter to author, March 10, 1993.[8] Letter to author, October 14, 1991.

[9] Letter to author, September 29, 1990.[10] Letter to author , August 27 , 1990.

BIRTH CENTENARY OF RAMAKRISHNA

The year 1936 saw jubilant celebrations all over India and in Vedanta centers in other parts of the world, honoring the One Hundredth Anniversary of the birth of Sri Ramakrishna. Beginning in February 1936 and extending through the Master's next birthday, March 1937, the Ramakrishna Order made this year an occasion for world-wide joy.

At this time the magnificent temple of Sri Rama-krishna was still being constructed, the cornerstone having been laid in March of 1929 by Swami Shivananda. When Tantine had arrived in India in November of 1935 all the construction going on had at first alarmed her, but then she was soon caught up in the beauty of what was taking shape. Writing to Jeanne Hollister, November 24, 1935 she said:

Now I'm wondering what this 4 months in India will develop -- owing to the fact that this place has become a workshop -- creating the finest Temple in modern India instead of the quiet Retreat I came to in 1898 -- Necessarily there is another outlook -- a need for a new adaptability. It is good seeing these hundreds of workmen about & the growing of this great Ramakrishna Temple -- 320 ft long, 120 broad -- & 112 ft high -- the hundreds of bamboo scaffoldings reminding me of Milan Cathedral. Then, too, they are building a new river wall -- 14 ft at its base -- to hold out the heavy tides & extend the property.... This new sea wall work as they call it often begins at 4 a.m. to take advantage of low tide & will take 5 years to complete. Didi [Betty Leggett] gave their last addition on the Ganges ... a pretty villa ... 100 ft of river frontage which they call "the Leggett House," now used as offices. They feed about 200 a day -- monks & visitors, but on the great festivities thousands & on Ramakrishna's birthday now 100,000 come -- & over 20 thousand fed -- The new Temple will not be finished till 1937.... The money to erect this temple is given by two shy modest American women from Providence, [Rhode Island], the plan being made by Swamiji -- Himself.[1]

One month later she wrote again to Jeanne Sturges about the great new sea wall: "I sit & watch -- learn -- & admire these workings of the Lord. Streams of men carrying brick & mortar or cement -- at low tide[2]."

The new Ramakrishna Temple was dedicated January 14, 1938. Tantine was not in India at that time but when she returned to Belur the following fall, she wrote to the Countess of Sandwich about the greatness of the temple:

I ... enclose a letter to Swami Akhilananda who has given the 200,000 dollars for this great new Ramakrishna Temple.... All criticism of so expending this vast sum of money fades away in this fulfillment of Swamiji's plan! For he, himself, gave, made the plan over 40 years ago. Thousands now come to see it daily. When I was at Almora, I met Miss Rubel -- "Bhakti" -- who gave the money to Swami Akhilananda, to do exactly what he wished to do with it, so she said to me, "I have nothing to do with the Temple. It was Swami Akhilananda's gift." Bhakti ... found no peace till she met Swami Akhilananda.[3]

Swami Vivekananda had envisioned that a temple built for Sri Ramakrishna should incorporate the best features of architecture seen in northwestern India, so that it might be an epitome of Indian culture just as the Master had himself embodied the realization of India's religious aspirations[4]. Vivekananda had once described for Swami Akhandananda the way he envisioned the interior of the temple, and said to him that images of gods and goddesses and saints would stand in spacious niches, while on the altar of Sri Ramakrishna there would be at the centre a resplendent OM set with jewels.[5]

On January 19, 1936, Tantine went with Achsah Brewster to Sargachi to visit Swami Akhandananda, who was now president of the Ramakrishna Order, having succeeded Swami Shivananda, who had passed away in 1934. Swami Akhandananda spent a great deal of time at Sargachi Ashrama. She later remarked of the swami that he was a loner, extremely rigorous and intellectual, and that though he ran the Math from a distance, he ran it with an iron hand[6].

During their visit Swami Akhandananda told Tantine about how painfully he had suffered after Swami Vivekananda's death in 1902.

Swami Akhandananda: I have seen Swamiji since his passing away -- as I see you now. Otherwise, I could not live. The separation was so painful that I wanted to commit suicide, but was prevented by Swamiji. He caught my hand just as I was about to jump under a running tram car in Calcutta.

Tantine: Yes, he lives in you, in me, in all. He cannot die. He is the Atman. They say Swamiji was a great teacher, but I and many others knew him to be a great *learner*. He learned from all, so he conquered all. He would learn something new constantly so he was always fresh, never monotonous, never repeating the same thing.

Swami Akhandananda: Yes, that is the teaching of our Gurumaharaj [Sri Ramakrishna]. On his deathbed, unable to speak because of throat soreness, he violently protested when someone said, "I know." He said: "You know? What do you know about the Infinite? Don't say that again. Friends, as long as I live, so long do I learn." That is what he taught and what we learned.[7]

A few nights before Tantine's visit to him, Swami Akhandananda had had a vision of Sri Ramakrishna in which he had said: "Truly, who can observe my centenary? I am Infinite and Eternal[8]." Now, when Tantine said, "Please give me your message for the coming centenary," the swami answered: "I have no message of my own, but I have received this message from the Lord: 'I am Infinite and Eternal. What is my centenary?'"[9]

Tantine was happy to have the swami's message and presented him with one of the Lalique crystals of Swami Vivekananda, saying, "Nothing but crystal can represent Swamiji[10]."

On the 23rd of February, Swami Akhandananda arrived at Belur Math and on the following day he inaugurated the Centenary Celebration of Sri Ramakrishna's birth. In his book *Swami Akhandananda*, Swami Annadananda described that auspicious day:

Mangalarati (the early morning service at the Math) was followed by chanting from the Vedas. Swami Vivekananda's speeches and articles on Sri Ramakrishna and the message of Swami Akhandananda were broadcast over the radio and through amplifiers. Musical parties sat here and there on the monastery grounds, singing devotional songs which greatly enhanced the festive atmosphere, while streams of joyful men, women, and children came pouring into the grounds of the monastery. Worship of gods and goddesses, and of teachers of the great world religions, continued throughout the day and night. People kept flocking to see President Maharaj Swami Akhandananda. He was in a happy mood, and a divine light seemed to shine about him. People could not be satisfied with only one short glimpse of him[11].

Thousands of people came to Belur Math during the auspicious occasion of Sri Ramakrishna's birth centenary year. Tantine was particularly thrilled to see the devotion and enthusiasm of so many Westerners who made the long journey there, and wrote to her friend Baronesse Wedell: "Did I tell you Sir Francis Younghusband comes to Sri Ramakrishna's Centenary? Hurrah[12]!" In his book, *Modern Mystics*, which had just been published in 1935, Sir Francis, who had been born in India to English parents, had included a chapter on Ramakrishna and Vivekananda.

Tantine often visited Madras (now Chennai) when she was in India. Swami Sarvajnananda had first met her in 1927 when he was a young monk, and later in Madras where he worked with rural uplift. He later reminisced about her:

Sometime after 1934 Miss MacLeod came to Madras. We were then rebuilding a colony that had been destroyed by fire. Swami Rudrananda, who was in charge, had collected enough funds to build one hundred huts, each fifteen feet by fifteen feet. This colony was named "Ramakrishna Puram." One day Miss MacLeod visited the colony and wanted to go inside one of the huts. She was a tall, slender woman, and the ceiling was low, so a Brahmachari had to assist her. After entering the hut she exclaimed, "This is what our Swamiji wanted -- that the poor people should be helped!"

Miss MacLeod ... came to Madras another time on her way to Calcutta. She took a taxi from the Madras harbour and arrived at the Madras Math about l:30 in the afternoon. The shrine was

closed. The Pujari Swami had already put the Lord to bed. Miss MacLeod said to Swami Sharvananda, the head of the Math, “I want to go to Swamiji’s room.” His room is adjacent to the Shrine room. Swami Sharvananda politely replied: “Swamiji is resting now. You will have to wait until 4 o’clock.” “Nonsense!” said Miss MacLeod. “Swamiji is resting! If he were alive he would have come to receive me at the port. And you say that he is resting! Please open the door right now!” Swami Sharvananda asked a monk to open the door of Swamiji’s room. I put Swamiji’s picture on the pillow, and Miss MacLeod then sat on his bed with her eyes closed. After some time she came out and returned to the harbour.[13]

[1] Sturges Coll.
[2] Sturges Coll, December 5, 1935.
[3] Culme-Seymour Coll., November 1, 1938.
[4] Moni Bagchi, Swami Abhedananda: The Spiritual Biography, (Calcutta: Rama krishna Vedanta Math, 1968), p. 437.
[5] Swami Annadananda , SwamiAkhandananda , (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1993)
[6] Inde, April 3, 1936
[7] Swami Niramayananda, recorder , The Call of the Spi rit, Conversations with Swami Akhandananda, (Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1984). pp. 61-62. [Hereafter, Call of the Spirit.]
[8] Swami Chetanananda, "Swami Akhandananda," God Lived with 17nm, (St. Louis: Vedanta Society of St. Louis, 1995), pp. 586-87.
[9] Swami Chetanananda, "Swami Akhandananda," God Lived with 17nm, (St. Louis: Vedanta Society of St. Louis, 1995), pp. 586-87.
[10] Swami Nirmayananda, Call of the Spirit, pp. 61-62.
[11] Swami Annadananda, Swami Akhandananda, p. 286.
[12] Wedell Coll., January 20, 1937.
[13] Swami Sarvajnananda, "Swami Brahmananda, Swami Shivananda, Josephine MacLeod, and Sister Christine," transcribed and edited by Swami Chetana nanda, VK, October 1990, p. 376

MORE DEVOTEES TO LOVE

Tantine was in India from December of 1936 to March 25, 1937, so she was present for concluding programs honoring Sri Ramakrishna's Birth Centenary, and she also got to attend the celebration on February 2 of Swami Vivekananda's Seventy-fifth Birth Anniversary. In a letter written that day she referred to it as "an intimate and holy occasion --an auspicious day[1]." At that time Swami Vijayananda was visiting Belur Math, and he invited Tantine to visit his centre in Buenos Aires "to show [the devotees] someone who had known Swamiji[2]." She sailed there the following August of 1937, making an arduous eighteen-day, equator-hot crossing. From Buenos Aires she wrote to Beatrice Cooke:

My three weeks here have been perfect -- such a welcome hospitality, and above all to see the growth in the swami and the center of fifty noble, fine devoted friends. It was well worth coming for. I've heard his talks in English -- beautiful, modest, sincere....

How little one knows what a step will lead us to. "You will get what you want," said Swamiji, "but look out!" My joy in my physical freedom remains unabated, yet I'm bound in body and mind all the same.... Keep a stout heart, knowing you *are* the Lord....[3]

Her return crossing to New York was very comfortable on a fast air-conditioned steamer, equipped with refrigeration for the food. She had fun watching the young people dance and learning a few card tricks from a magician.[4]

From the fall of 1937 to the fall of 1938, Tantine travelled a good deal in the West. Detailed information about her travels comes from the letters of Swami Atula-nanda, some excerpts of which follow. He often reported to Ida Ansell what he had heard from Tantine or from Beatrice Cooke.

December 4, 1937: "Tantine very much alive, visiting people in different cities where she goes by automobile. She writes: 'Here I am in Heaven! Since 2 days with Mrs. Breed (in New York), with no further plans. Tomorrow we go to hear Dr. [Carl] Jung --the Luzerne psychologist answer questions at the International Students Union. Lawrence Tompkins the sculptor is going too.

'I've just had such a nice hour's talk with Swami Nikhilananda. So fine, noble. I stayed 2 days in Washington again for the opening of the new Federal Reserve Bank by President Roosevelt. His power lies in his geniality -- warm, radiant, serene. Then I go to spend 3 days at Princeton with the Wyckoffs. He is one of the Rockefeller Research workers.'"[5]

This next letter quotes from a letter written by Tantine from Paris, probably in late fall of 1937. "I am feeling well again -- ... But how uncertain life is! Well today; gone tomorrow."[6]

January 29, 1938: "Tantine is in England. She sailed on the S. S. *Bremen*, a 5 days' trip. On the same steamer were Prof. and Mrs. [William] Hocking -- the head of Harvard Philosophy dept, old friends of Tantine.... His book, *The Meaning of God in Human Experience*, some years ago, gave him offers from 7 universities. He chose Harvard. T. writes, 'He is no more sectarian than Swamiji. All life is his province; no clipping of wings to get into anybody else's ideas of God.'"[7]

March 19, 1938: "Tantine is ... in Paris. The latest is that she takes twice a week the Quinton seawater injections with good results,... When a friend told Tantine that it was risky to experiment in old age, T. replied, 'You call me old? I'm only 43, that is, it was 43 years ago that I met Swamiji and I really began to live.' Isn't that like her?... Swami Siddheshwarananda brought Paul Brunton[8] to meet her. She writes: 'A quiet, shyish, small man, Jewish father, English mother.... He comes to see the swami so he can write of the authentic spiritual teachings.' T. is all enthusiasm."[9]

Even injuring her leg did not prevent Tantine from gracefully carrying on. Swami Atulananda quoted from a letter she had written from Paris in the spring of 1938, in which she had said: "I have hurt the muscles under my left knee by a fall.... Immediately after I fell I took a taxi to Alberta's and lying on the sofa I had 5 guests to tea there instead of at my hotel. I like new

people and their contributions, especially if they differ from me. When someone asked me how I protect myself against those I don't want to see, I said, 'I stop. This world belongs to the Lord, not to me. My job is to take care of myself.'"[10]

May 4, 1938: "Tantine writes: 'My real life began forty-three years ago. And though my strength of body is in abeyance, my keenness to learn remains unimpaired, and everybody teaches me something. When I asked my Swedish masseur what was the outstanding thing he had learned in life, he said, "The lack of common sense in people." So now I'm watching to see if that is true of me.'"[11]

[1] Letter to Glen Overton, Febru ary 2, 1937, courtesy of Vivekananda Vedanta Society (Chicago).
[2] Letter to Glen Overton, December 31, 1936, courtesy of Vivekananda Vedanta societ y (Chicago); and Wedell Coll., January 11, 1937.
[3] With the Swamis, p. 286.
[4] Friends Coll.: Swami Atula nanda to Ida A nse ll, October 2, 1937.[5] Friends Coll.[6] With the Swamis, p. 284.[7] With the Swamis., p. 286.
[8] Brunton's first book, A Secret Search in India, had been published in 1934 and made Ramana Maharshi known to the West. Later he wrote ten more books on spiritual life[9] With the Swamis., p. 287..
[10] With the Swamis.[11] With the Swamis, p. 288.

NIKOS! NIKOLO

In May of 1938 Tantine went to Greece to meet Nikos Kazantzakis. He and his wife, Eleni (or Helen), were friends of Jean Herbert, who had done translations of so many of Vivekananda's works, and it had been arranged that Eleni would translate two of the swami's works into Greek. From Eleni's biography of Nikos, the following excerpt tells about Tantine's arrival in Greece and her grand descent upon the Kazantzakis household:

"Stones don't interest me one bit!" she announced to me the very first moment we met in Athens. "Neither the Acropolis nor any of your old treasure troves. I like to meet human beings. Who's this Nikos Kazantzakis...?"

Lithe and erect in spite of her advanced age, the lady from America sprang out of her armchair. "Let's go on to Aegina at once! I'm burning to meet him."

"I'll sleep in a different room every day," Tantine announced to us once she reached Aegina. "And please leave all the doors open. I love to know what's going on around me!"

She didn't change beds, but she did inspect the house from each and every angle. Clinging to the narrow staircase, she climbed up to the highest terrace, reveling in the Saronic [Bay], stubbornly refusing all assistance.

"You've known me only since yesterday," she said, "and you suppose you can help me? I've known myself for eighty years. I can do it better than anyone."

At the dining table, Tantine ate only the white of the egg. "Eleni, that yolk is clean. You mustn't throw it away!"

"Of course, Tantine," I answered, without budging.

"Eleni, that yolk is clean! Are you going to throw it away?" she repeated with a severe air. In a single gulp, I swallowed the little amber ball. Tantine had given me my first lesson in economy.

"Make economies, Eleni. Don't allow any waste. But learn to give to the great causes. And then give with both hands! And God bless you! I see you need it."[1]

Nikos had begun his writing career in Paris, and was associated with the French philosopher Bergson and many great intellectuals and artists of Europe. As a youth he had loved Buddha. "Buddha was my personal god," he once said. "I took him as my ideal. Buddha taught: Forget about sense objects and be pure from inside. Don't love anyone and don't hate anyone. Don't experience anything and don't hope for anything. When you are dead, the world will vanish..."[2] Kazantzakis is perhaps best known for his *Zorba the Greek* and *The Last Temptation of Christ*.

For the last thirteen years, Kazantzakis had been working on a *magnum opus* (referred to privately as "The Monster"). It was a huge manuscript written about the famous Greek epic, *The Odyssey*, in 33,333 lines. When Tantine saw the manuscript on his desk, she immediately asked about it, and when he had given her two hours' worth of description, she called to Eleni: "You there! Get my purse. It's on my bed. And come back quickly." Then she asked, "How much do you need to print *The Odyssey*, Nikolo?" When he told her, "Approximately fifteen hundred dollars," she wrote out a check for the sum. This enabled him to produce 300 *in-folio* (single fold) copies.[3]

Nikos and Eleni later stayed at Hall's Croft, where he wrote *England*. In that book he recorded a conversation he had with Tantine in the rose garden. This was probably in 1939.

This marvelous woman was over eighty years old, finely made, slender, supple, with bright blue eyes, a powerful jawbone, a smile all severity and thoughtfulness. I had never seen such vitality, such an insatiable urge to see and hear, such a triumph of the human being in conquering time. She had moved from India to Europe, from Europe to America, all alone, hurrying impatiently on, as though she feared that her eyes might suddenly close forever and she wouldn't have time to see and feel everything. An unappeasable thirst for learning, a mind

as avid as a child's ever ready to ask and to take. "Learning is my religion," she herself said with a smile for this inexhaustible, unquenchable need of hers.
She had a much-loved home on the Ganges, rising pure white alongside the tomb of Vivekananda. In this house she used to take refuge in order to concentrate. Not, however, according to the Oriental method of remaining motionless and allowing the thoughts to collect around a fixed point. That manner of concentration was utterly alien to her own active, irrepressible nature. This rare woman concentrated by acting.
She was economical in her everyday life to the point of parsimony, never wasting anything in unimportant matters. But once, after concentrating, she had made a decision and determined what she had to do, then she would suddenly expend huge amounts for works that she thought should be done....
[When she met Vivekananda] she gave him money immediately so that he could dedicate himself wholly to his mission. A throng of men and women had gathered around him, and they listened to him open-mouthed. No one but this indomitable woman stood up to him as a free and clear-sighted human being, and often in her smilingly independent way she would poke quiet fun at his little human failings. Is there any surer sign of indissoluble friendship?
"I loved and honored him very much," she said to me one day, "and I knew that he could take my teasing even when it stung the most."
"Tell me about Vivekananda," I asked her, with my mind very far away from this well-meaning, rather simple-minded apostle of love. But I liked seeing how the spark of a human being's life can last more than eighty years -- eighty years of burning the machine and not having it rust, with the teeth, the feet, the kidneys, the brain all strong at work, able to do their duty, still intact without a falter; able to take in the raw materials of food, drink, air, and the sun's heat, and transform them into spirit....
As [Tantine] spoke of Vivekananda, the indomitable old lady swung her beautiful, transparent hands serenely as if caressing the air. Vivekananda was still the greatest person she had met in her long, much-traveled life. He had given a purpose and a unity to her action, and surely this man who had died so young had helped her to live so long and so correctly.
She stroked a white rose, as she continued: "When [Christians and others who were jealous of him] cursed him and slandered him, he remained silent and buried himself in thought. Suddenly his face would light up, and he would murmur softly, as though he were praying, 'Shiva! Shiva!'
"'But you must answer,' I used to tell him. 'You must defend yourself and get angry -- like a man!'
"And he would reply with a smile: 'Why? For what reason, my dear one? Since the one who strikes and the one who is struck are the same? Since the one who praises and the one who is praised are the same? *Tat tvam asi* -- We are all one.'
"He was simple like a child, innocent as a saint. His mind never turned toward evil. He laughed with us and played. There were many women around him and beautiful ones, but he never got misty-eyed for a single moment. If he had, I would have been the first to notice. It wouldn't have escaped me."
She laughed and tossed her snow-white head. "What momentous, meaningful days!" she said, glancing far, far off in the direction of India.
But soon she returned to Stratford, to her sun-bathed garden, to the atmosphere of war. "And these days are very momentous and meaningful too," she said. "But those days were altogether different. We had a simple, wise holy man with us. And whatever he said penetrated into our whole hearts. He was very fond of recounting to us tales about his fatherland, and he would extract from the simplest folk myths the loftiest of moral doctrines. One day he told us a story that had a decisive influence upon my life:
"[Vivekananda said:] 'Once upon a time a birdcatcher caught a great number of doves and shut them up in a big net. The doves immediately began trying to squeeze through the holes and get free, but they were too big. So they submitted to their fate. Every day the birdcatcher came and fed them. He threw them food in abundance so they would get fat quickly, and he could

slaughter and sell them. All the doves ate with a great appetite, not realizing that the more they ate the fatter they got, and the fatter they got the closer they came to death. Only one dove refrained from eating. It got thinner and thinner, and finally one day it was able to get out of the net and fly away....'"

Tantine took out a well-worn true copy of the letter Swami Vivekananda had written to her on April 18, 1900 from Alameda, California, the one she carried with her everywhere. She read it aloud to Nikos, then asked him:

"Do you ever pray? When you are very happy or in deep despair, do you pray?"

"Never!" I answered. "I never pray."

"What do you do then?"

"I write. That's how I find relief."

"I don't ever pray either," said Miss MacLeod. "When I'm very much moved, I go for a walk -- not in the country, but in the city -- and I look at the people. Or I do something that I think is a good act. Or else I read this letter. That's how I find relief."[4]

[1] Helen Kazantzakis, Nikos Kazantzakis (A Biography), pp. 352-53. [Hereafter, Nikos Kaza11tzakis.l

[2] Swami Chctanananda, "Tantiner Smritite Vivekananda [Tantine's Reminiscences of Swami Vivekananda"], Viswa vani, pp. 351-59.

[3] Helen Kazantzakis, Nikos Kazantzakis, p. 353.

[4] Nikos Kazantzakis, England, pp. 249-56.

DANCE OF FREEDOM

Tantine's final visit to India lasted from her arrival there on October 6, 1938 to her departure on March 11, 1939. Letters written by others before her arrival indicate the effect she could have on others. Swami Atulananda wrote:

(August 27, 1938): Mrs. [Cooke] is quite excited. "What fun," she writes, "to see Tantine again all vital. We'll talk and talk, I guess. I feel like a child! All gay! I, who have no one to talk to at all. And to see how she and [my husband] get along."

(September 6, 1938): Mrs. C. has been keeping all [Tantine's] letters for years, thinking they might be useful should anyone want to write her biography. And now she discovers that white ants have destroyed the lot. Tantine hearing of it, writes: "I'm so sorry since you prized them. Instead I'm sending enclosed 2 or 3 long hairs -- perhaps they knew Swamiji -- which came off my head this morning." I think it is awfully funny, but she gives it a nice turn. Everything in her life is connected with Swamiji. Mrs. C. writes, "I was so deeply touched by her sending her hair, dear Tantine. Even if it is Maya, human love is the best there is in it."[1]

After Tantine visited Swami Atulananda and Beatrice Cooke in Almora that October, Beatrice wrote to the swami, and he in turn reported to his friend Ida Ansell:

Mrs. C. writes, "Tantine has left -- a joyous dancing whirlwind! She gave me the whole picture of her 'play' with you there in Almora. I relived it all and felt so close to you all there. She's so vivid and vital and sweeping. The closer she comes to the veil of death the more vivid and vital she seems. She senses her own lack of physical strength and said, 'I may never get to Calcutta.' Then she added, 'Or I may live another 20 years.' She seemed to love my home and found it beautiful. She was thoroughly delighted. I gave her a beautiful girl to play with and she told her stories of Swamiji. And the child fell for her, of course -- all adoration. And so Tantine played and had her fun, and I think was happy."[2]

Swami Atulananda also wrote about Tantine's visiting the Ramakrishna Ashrama at Almora:

Her face very much wrinkled, hair white, eyes (light blue) look faded. But she is still all there, empirical looking, enthusiastic, considerable energy and strength left, though a little wobbly on her feet. She usually takes someone's support when she walks....

On the 11th we all (from the Ashrama) went to her at 10 AM as all the Sadhus [monks] wanted to meet her and hear her talk on Swamiji. She talked without any interruption for about 40 minutes. Animated talk with gestures and facial expressions, (*a la Tantine*). Emphatic, admonishing the Sadhus not to be idle, but to be up and doing. "Work is religion! Do something. I don't care what it is. Use your hands, your brains. Swamiji said, 'To learn is religion.' He learned every day. He was dif-ferent every day. Always fresh, throwing out new ideas. Learn and work. What have you learned since yesterday? (Pointing a finger at one after the other, but fortunately not waiting for a reply.) India wants you, the world wants you. Preach Swamiji through work. Uphold Swamiji's banner." Then she told some stories.... Well, the whole talk was strong and inspiring.

On the 11th she came in a dandy to our Ashrama ... to see our typhoid patient who is now recovering. She told everyone to leave the room; she wanted to be alone with him. She talked to him without a break for half an hour.

"... I don't want to hear about people's faults," she says. "I want to know their good, strong points. Swamiji always brought out the best there is in a person. That was his way of helping them. He didn't allow anyone to lean on him. 'Stand on your own feet,' he would say, 'on your own strength.'"[3]

Tantine was kept busy meeting people, having lunch with old friends, and writing letters. To either Beatrice Cooke or Swami Atulananda she wrote on January 1, 1939 from Utter Pradesh:

Lady B., an American, came to see me, an old acquaintance much interested in the Madras saints.... Swami Srivasananda was excellent and I let him do the talking as religious discussions don't interest me. Tomorrow I distribute prizes at the Nivedita School.... Saturday I give a talk to 100 boys at the Vivekananda Ashrama. Sunday I go to the Cathedral Xmas service. Stay for

lunch with the P's... Then the Viceroy's garden party. I've invited Miss [Ruble, of Boston] (Bhakti) to come for a month to visit me here.... I love and admire her gentle, shy nature.[4]

By mid-January Tantine was at the Guest House at Belur. Swami Atulananda, who was also visiting Belur at that time, gave a picture of the growth of the Math compound in a letter written on January 15, 1939:

It is lovely here [at Belur Math]. Such changes and so much more comfort. Tantine is in the guest house upstairs. The new [Ramakrishna] temple is a beautiful structure, inside and outside. I love the inside, especially in the evening when the arati service takes place and the lights are on. The Math grounds are very much extended so there is much open space all around the temple. Lots of visitors come daily. And it is really worth seeing....[5]

Swami Sarvagatananda, who was a young monk at that time, met Tantine at Belur in 1939. He had been given the assignment of taking her to see a *Kathakali* performance. A *Kathakali* is a lengthy and elaborate theatrical production, with music, dance, singing, and acting. The performing artists who take part in it have trained for years in a special *Kathakali* school. To apply make-up and put on masks and costumes for a single performance requires several hours. Swami Sarvagatananda later said about his experience at the *Kathakali* with Tantine:

On the stage, two boys stood on either side, each holding on to the stage curtains, keeping them parted so that the audience could see the performance on the stage. The whole production took several hours.

I had been asked to explain to Tantine what was going on, and at the end of the performance, I asked, "Well, how did you like it?"

She answered: "If I had to give a prize, I would give it to the two boys who held the curtains. There they stood, just like two statues, while all the action and show were going on!"

She was a very keen observer. She had so many questions. I had to be constantly alert so I could answer them all[6].

During a visit to India, Tantine was asked to give a description of Swami Vivekananda in one word. She was a little startled at first by the challenge, but then replied: "I asked Swamiji the same question about his guru. I shall tell you the same thing that he told me in reply: 'He was not holy, but he was holiness itself! Over and above that, he was the very embodiment of power, of courage. In one word he was the sum total of everything that is good.'"[7]

On March 11, 1939, standing on the deck of the S. S. *President Polk* Tantine set sail from India for the last time. Before leaving, she had written to Lady Sandwich: "'The readiness is all' shall be put on my tombstone if I ever have one!... I stumbled into a family that gave *freedom*! Then Swamiji [when I was] 35 gave spiritual freedom; no wonder I'm happy -- *learning*[8]!"

Still basking in the glow of Tantine's visit to her, Beatrice Cooke wrote right away to Swami Atulananda:

Dear Tantine, she has helped and loved many, and no one has "caught" her. Not even Swamiji. She plays with the world as her toy. And plays with the Lord. Really she is a great lover though she imagines she is a jnani. She loved Swamiji but always danced one step ahead of him. He never changed her external life. She loved and played and went her own sweet way -- the way that suited her own game. Shakti -- the dancing Kali. And Shiva not even able to catch her dancing feet. I hope they will put her photo in the Math. Never shall I forget her ringing voice to a most humble devoted audience, "Swamiji cleaned my shoes!" That is Tantine. What a memory for the Math she'll be. Who, I wonder, will write her life. Who ever knew her? I guess Swamiji knew her best, as Turiyananda knew you best....[9]

From aboard ship Tantine wrote to the Countess of Sandwich on March 13, 1939: "As the present Abbot, Swamiji Virajananda, came to say goodbye, I gave him some of Swamiji's hair that I cut off myself (I think in Vienna). Such a look of joy as he gave me and said, 'Once, as some of Swamiji's hair lay on the floor, cut by the barber, Swamiji said to me, "In a century, a lakh of rupees (100,000) will be given for one hair of my head."' Oh the wonder of my having *recognized* Swamiji instantly and irrevocably; on that recognition the past 44 years of my life have been built."[10]

Wherever Tantine went she learned something new every day. Writing to Lady Sandwich on December 22, 1939, just before her eighty-first birthday, she said, “Life here on earth is a grand opportunity; learn, learn, day and night, knowing that all one can learn on earth one can use, any and everywhere, since Spirit never dies[11].” And in a letter to Swami Atulananda, March 6, 1940, she told him, “Each day brings something new -- unprepared, and to face these new conditions keeps one alert and alive.”[12]

In a letter to Swami Akhandananda, December 6, 1934, Tantine had written about the Ramakrishna Order: “... As long as ‘to learn’ continues to be its foundation, all is well. ‘To learn’ never antagonizes ‘to teach.’ Often that is the reason I tell these fine boys who come to the West ‘to learn’ what the West has to teach, as Swamiji did.”[13]

“My religion is to learn from any and everybody, for this is the Lord’s world and he has put me here *to learn* as well as to worship!” she wrote in May of 1941[14]. Her thirst for knowledge was not limited to externals; she was somewhat detached in her self-analysis as one sees in her letters. What she heard from others or read, she tried to apply in her own life. Writing to Lady Sandwich in December of 1938, she said, “Do remember that Life is fluid, like water, takes on different shapes, colours, tastes, constantly, so if we can take on this fluidity, instead of the shape, colour, taste, we will *watch -- be the witness*, instead of the victim[15].”

This fluidity Tantine mentions, seems to be an equivalent of adaptability to changing circumstances. She kept herself open to the possibility of change, remaining in that state of readiness, so often attributed to her, and being the witness of it all, instead of having expectations and plans which would only have set her up for disappointment had they failed. She protected herself through planlessness.

Tantine’s fresh approach to life makes it difficult to find lines of demarcation from one phase to the next. She was often in a state of wonder and excitement, that state commonly associated with the beginning of things. “I love *sudden* things,” she once said[16], and as she sailed from India for the last time that March of 1939, she wrote to Lady Sandwich from Port Said: “If I go to New York, it is for the *Unknown*! The unknown God, that takes such myriad shapes and forms, always keeping us guessing -- wondering!”[17]

[1] Friends Coll.; and With the Swamis, p. 291.
[2] With the Swamis, p. 291.
[3] With the Swamis., pp. 289-90.
[4] Friends Coll.
[5] Friends Coll..
[6] Related to author, June 12, 1988.
[7] Anonymous manuscript, "Vivekananda in the Life of Miss Josephine MacLeod," courtesy of Vivekananda Vedanta Society (Chicago USA).
[8] Culme-Seymour Coll., February 28, 1939
[9] With the Swamis, pp. 292-93.
[10] Culme-Seymour Coll., March 13, 1939
[11] Culme-Seymour Coll, December 22, 1939.
[12] With the Swamis, p. 296.
[13] "An Unpublished Letter of Miss MacLeod," PB, June 1968, p. 242.
[14] Culme-Seymour Coll., May 14, 1941.
[15] Culme-Seymour Coll., December 30, 1938.
[16] Friends Coll., Josephine Mac Leod to Theodore Whitmarsh, May 1926.
[17] Culme-Seymour Coll., March 21, 1939.

FRIEND AND DISCIPLE (HEAVEN IN THE EAST, HEAVEN IN THE WEST) (Part One)

> *"Will I ever leave Vivekananda? Why, of course I will if I find someone better than him! But I know I shall never find anyone better than him."*
>
> -- *Josephine MacLeod*[1]

When Tantine returned to America in the spring of 1939, she was thrilled to see all the growth that was taking place there in the Vedanta work. In New York, Swami Nikhilananda had just bought "a fine house" at 17 East Ninety-fourth Street for the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre. The property was dedicated the following July 4th, and formally occupied in October. At that time a three-day celebration was held. Swamis Paramananda, Viswananda, and Akhilananda, Gayatri Devi (Swami Paramananda's niece), and Tantine were guest speakers at a banquet[2]. Tantine wrote about Swami Nikhilananda: "There is a great gain in [him], not only in health but a new spiritual power. I love to see Swamiji's children grow up, more and more worthy of Him."[3]

In California, great foundations for Vedanta work were being quietly and steadily built by Swami Prabhavananda in Hollywood and Swami Ashokananda in San Francisco. Tantine was to spend most of the next decade -- her last -- in New York or California. As mentioned previously, it is said that Tantine thought she saw Swami Vivekananda in three swamis: The first was Swami Vijayananda; the other two were Swamis Prabhavananda and Ashokananda.

Swami Prabhavananda had founded the Vedanta Society of Southern California in 1929 with the help of Carrie Mead Wyckoff, who was now known as Sister Lalita. It will be recalled that she and her family had hosted Swami Vivekananda in the winter of 1900 in Pasadena. In 1928 she had met Swami Prabhavananda and had offered him her house in Hollywood if he would use it for Vedanta work. He had agreed, and her little green house was for many years the entire Vedanta Society of Southern California. Today it houses the bookshop and offices of that large center.

The first several years in Hollywood had been very austere ones for Swami Prabhavananda. Many times meals consisted of only popcorn and milk. Few people came to his Services, but still the swami would always give full, eloquent lectures, and spent his spare time translating Hindu scriptures into readable and enjoyable English[4]. Once, during these lean days, the swami had been worried about having no money to meet a payment that was due. That very day, Tantine arrived to visit, chatted with him for a good part of the day, and left a donation, which happened to be the exact amount needed to pay the bill.[5]

Gradually a small, devoted nucleus of devotees had formed and little by little the house was added onto and more activities were begun. In 1938 money which Sister Lalita had donated enabled the swami to build a snow-white domed temple adjacent to the little green house. On June 14, 1939, Tantine wrote to the Countess of Sandwich from Los Angeles:

I saw the dear swami here, coming from the station, and the beautiful new Vedanta Temple. He dines here tonight, and tomorrow gives a reception for me, when Gerald Heard, one of his friends will be there. This Swami Prabhavananda I like very much -- scholarly, making friends with scientists -- this beautiful white Temple is given to him by Mrs. Wyckoff who 40 years ago came with 2 sisters to call on Swamiji, when he and I were with Mrs. Blodgett....[6]

The next day, Tantine gave her reminiscences of Vivekananda at the Vedanta Temple, Swami Prabhavananda foregoing his usual lecture so that she could do so. That same day she wrote to a friend: "I stay in bed mornings and continue my twenty-minute to half-hour meditation in bed.... Everyone wants to hear my reminiscences of Swamiji, so I'm happy...."[7]

By the third week of June, Tantine was in San Francisco, staying with Drinette Verdier. On June 22 she wrote to Lady Sandwich: "Last night Swami Ashokananda gave a great lecture on

Buddha! And we've known the new Buddha! On Tuesday he takes me to see their new Temple at Berkeley, to be finished next month."[8]

Swami Ashokananda also asked Tantine to give her reminiscences of Vivekananda, which she did one Friday evening in July. In later years, Swami Chidrupananda, who was present when Tantine spoke, talked about that occasion. Tantine was, he said, the only person who was not a swami of the Ramakrishna Order who was allowed by Swami Ashokananda to speak from the platform of the Vedanta Temple. Also, when she was asked to remove her shoes (either there or in the Shrine), she declined, saying that Vivekananda had never demanded it[9].

Later, in response to someone's asking about her experience at the San Francisco center, Tantine said that Swami Ashokananda's lecturing was the nearest to that of Swami Vivekananda that she had ever heard[10].

Regarding Tantine's refusal to remove her shoes when requested to do so, Swami Vidyatmananda has also described in an article published in *Vedanta Kesari* about what happened once in India when Tantine refused to remove her shoes before entering a meditation hall. The swami writes: "The presiding Swami was dismayed. Knowing who she was and respecting her, he tried gently to remonstrate. 'Don't try to teach me the religion of shoes. I know what I'm doing,' she snapped. 'I am the friend of the founder of this Order; he won't be shocked.' And she went into [the meditation hall], shoes and all[11]."

The year 1939 was a happy one for Tantine. She was seeing great growth of the Vedanta movement in India and the West, and she was able to serve others with her memories of Swamiji. "I love not having any plans," she wrote in a letter from San Francisco, July 15, "making new friends, expanding on new lines, with *wonder* as the basis of life[12]." And Swami Atulananda remarked about her during this same period, saying: "What a blessed old age Tantine has! Financially independent, health and strength enough to do and go as she pleases, her mind fresh and enthusiastic, no ties, a life dedicated to serving Swamiji, a loving and kind heart."[13]

Back in New York that September she settled in at the Barbizon-Plaza again, with no desire to leave. The elegant Barbizon-Plaza, with its many tall towers, overlooked the southern tip of Central Park. Eighteen floors below her little room she could see the dozen or so horse carriages gathered at the southern curb, waiting to take visitors on leisurely tours of the 850-acre park. She could see a children's playground, in winter skaters on the outdoor ice rink, and in summer perhaps some of the beautiful Bethesda fountain and its surrounding pool. To Lady Sandwich she wrote: "I am likely to remain on here in my little niche, not much bigger than a ship's cabin in size, but overlooking sky, park, with radio, telephone, heat, light, comfort, and inner peace -- since I find myself turning more and more into the inner peace that passeth understanding at 80.... I saw _____ very unhappy, as if she had nothing spiritual to draw upon, poor dear! Intellect doesn't sustain in real trouble."[14]

On her eighty-first birthday, December 26, 1939, she wrote to Dorothy Elmhirst, "I keep very well -- in my little niche in the heavens -- 18 stories up -- wondering what the Lord has up His sleeve for His and your devoted Tantine[15]." She considered her little apartment to be a shrine, and with the outbreak of the Second World War, she knew she would not be going anywhere.

In March of 1940 she wrote to Lady Sandwich showing her willingness to remain in America and reflecting farsightedness. "I am not at all inclined to go to the War zone in India or Europe, and as Swamiji says, 'My work will be more in the West; thence it will react on India.' I may help more in USA than in India. Now there are hundreds interested in Indian spirituality in USA; they will grow to thousands, then millions, and as America is becoming the leading country, its influence will react on the world."[16]

[1] Sankari Prasad Basu, "An Uncommon Woman, Family, and Swami Vivekananda," Yugantar, Annual Edition, 1979.

[2] Sara Ann Levinsky, A Bridge of Dreams, pp. 549-60.
[3] Friends Coll.: Related in letter of Swami Atulananda to Ida Ansell, December 3, 1939.
[4] Linda Prugh, ·'Sister Lalita: A Great Teaching," PB, January 1985, p. 21.
[5] Whitmarsh, 1983.[6] Culme-Seymour Coll., July 14 , 1939.[7] With the Swamis, p. 293.
[8] Culme-Seymour Coll., June 22, 1939
[9] Swami Yogeshananda, letter to author, December 4, 1988.
[10] Swami Yogeshananda, letter to author, December 4, 1988.
[11] Swami Vidyatmananda, "Swami Vivekananda at Almora," VK, Nov-Dec (An nual Issue) 1987, p. 480.[12] With the Swamis, pp. 293-94.[13] With the Swamis, pp. 293-94.
[14] Culme-Seymour Coll., Sep tember 22, 1939.[15] Elmhirst Coll.
[16] Culme-Seymour Coll., March 8, 1940.

THE HAT

In the last decade of her life, Tantine spent much time in the company of Katherine Whitmarsh, who later related numerous anecdotes about the remarkable Tantine. Her years at the Barbizon-Plaza are depicted in several of Katherine's stories, for she would often help Tantine, taking her places and generally going along on Tantine's adventures.

By now, Tantine's face was wrinkled, her eyes were faded, her hair was white, and whether indoors or out, she would usually wear a black hat. The hat had been designed for her by her friend Ruth St. Denis, world-famous dancer[1]. The hat was covered with black lace, which gracefully encircled Tantine's neck. A London society milliner known as Miss Rikki had produced the hat, making three copies for her[2]. Katherine Whitmarsh once recalled: "Somehow that black hat went with Tantine. In the morning she would get up and put on that hat, and she wouldn't have to bother with doing her hair. In the daytime I would often see her lying down in bed, but she'd still have on the hat!" [3]

Just after returning from Greece in May of 1938, Tantine had written to Baronesse Wedell about her hat: "Yesterday at a tea party, a young Greek came up to me and said, 'Didn't I see you at the Grand Battania Hotel in Athens last month?' I said Yes. Such fun! You see it is my hat that is arresting. Now I have three, like a uniform, and it is becoming and so light, I don't know I have it on. Miss Rikki, the milliner ... is such a comfort ... and so reasonable I don't even have to ask the prices."[4]

"These yanks can do anything," Swami Vivekananda had proudly declared about Sara Bull and Joe MacLeod in 1898 when they had set up housekeeping in the little cottage at Belur making do with the means at hand. And it was this yankee resourcefulness and self-confidence that Tantine tried to bring out in others by helping them believe in themselves. People responded to her because of her personality. Katherine Whitmarsh stated:

Tantine would spend about two hours a day writing letters to friends all over the world. She would keep in touch with everybody and encourage them and try to help them.

Tantine was full of fun. She was a joyous person and she laughed a lot. She enjoyed life. There wasn't anything tragic about her. She had a real fire in her face! She was alive! She was full of vigour and vim!

Tantine was tall and very thin and not a bit good looking, but she was very attractive in her manner of speaking to people. Everything she said to me I found intensely interesting. And she never talked of anything but Vedanta. She fascinated me![5]

She fascinated others too, many coming in each day to visit her in her tiny room. Katherine, knowing Tantine's delicate state of health, tried to cut back on the number of callers but Tantine basked in the fun. Katherine Whit-marsh's account continues:

Tantine would get up in the morning, get fully dressed, including The Hat, then lie back in bed. Presently a stream of callers would begin, and they would often include some rather distinguished people. Tantine would feel she should do something for them so then she'd take them all to lunch *at the automat*![6]

The automat was known for being the place to go if one had little money or was in a big hurry. It was also a great tourist attraction. The walls were pigeon-holed with little glass windows. One looked in each window and saw some type of food: an apple, a sandwich, a piece of cake, etc. By putting money in a slot by the glass pigeon hole, one could take out the food. There were dining tables in the center of the room. It was a combination cafeteria and giant vending machine, and not the most appetizing way to dine. As Katherine Whitmarsh recalled:

There would be these distinguished people and Tantine and I all trooping in a long procession, and we'd go down the elevator of her building and walk to the automat. It was only two blocks away, but we had to cross Sixth Avenue, which was a very broad street with very heavy traffic. Tantine would pay no attention at all to the traffic. She'd just raise her hand in the air and walk right across the street, in front of all the oncoming cars, and the rest of us would follow behind

her, just shaking in terror. And when we'd arrive at the automat, she'd say, "They have wonderful food here," and everyone would be a just aghast![7]

About Tantine in the 1940s, her niece Frances Leggett later observed:

Indifferent as she had always been to the past, Joe now rather liked being questioned. In New York, sitting opposite her niece at Longchamps, wearing the Hat ... that became her so well with its graceful black lace swathed beneath the chin ... and the Jewel (cum Hindu sapphire cum Lalique design) that toned so well with her eyes and made, as she said, so many friends, she was a striking figure. Spare and active still, with thick white hair and deep-set eyes and the benign expression that settled on her face in her great old age.

"They think I am a saint," she sometimes murmured (not without a twinkle); and they did, some of them. Those who came to hear about the Swami, who liked to listen to her reminiscing -- that heterogeneous collection who made up "Tantine's children" and were wafted from time to time to the 18th floor of the Barbizon-Plaza on visits to this eccentric old lady in her "niche in the heavens."[8]

All her life, Tantine had suffered with indigestion, but her method of cure was like her: independent and unusual. Katherine Whitmarsh stated that Tantine had learned somewhere to cure herself by staying alone in her room for three days, eating nothing. Once when she did this, Katherine was terribly worried about her, because she was frail and thin to begin with. Then on the fourth day, Tantine suddenly burst out of her room, just glowing, and said: "Come on. Let's go out for lobster!"[9]

Tantine also used to doze off to sleep easily. Kathe-rine Whitmarsh remembered how once she herself had been going through some difficulty and hated to talk about it to anybody but had finally forced herself to confide in Tantine. "I sort of kept my eyes down while I was talking to Tantine," she said, "because it was very difficult to talk about my problems. It was embarrassing. And then when I finally did look up, there was Tantine sound asleep. I was so relieved because I hadn't really wanted to tell her anything in the first place!"[10]

Carrying herself along the streets of New York "like a ship in full sail," as Magdalena Sturges has put it, Tantine in her eighties still attracted people. Katherine Whitmarsh recalled:

There were many very smart shops on Fifty-seventh Street, where we often walked, and there was one women's clothing designer named Tepez. In those days one had one's clothing designed. Tepez was quite well known, and I used to get things from him occasionally. I went into his shop one day and he said to me: "I have just seen the most amazing, beautiful woman I've ever seen in my life. Never have I seen anything like her." And he went on and on, and pretty soon I realized that he was describing Tantine, marching down along the street, wearing the black hat and one of Betty's old dresses. Even though Betty's clothes were no longer in style, they had all been made by famous designers -- Worth and so on -- and Tepez recognized that high quality[11].

Tantine was active all the time she lived in New York. The Town Hall was a popular city club, where people could speak out on issues. Tantine went there several days a week and was honored in the traditional Western fashion by being given a seat marked by a little plaque with her name engraved on it[12]. She also attended lectures and pujas at Swami Nikhilananda's center, where, as she her-self stated, "... [the devotees] do so like my going .. since I knew Swamiji[13]." In the spring of 1941, Tantine paid an elocution teacher twenty-five dollars to give five lessons in pronunciation to Swami Nikhilananda, which she later said was "well worth it[14]."

In her letters are numerous references to famous personalities of her day, people whom she mentions casually. There was, for example, Mrs. James Roosevelt, mother of Franklin D. Roosevelt (President of the United States 1933-45). Tantine writes in 1941, during the Second World War: "I took Drinette Verdier to Mrs. James Roosevelt to tell of the starvation in France... As the President was coming to stay the next day with his mother, she said she'd tell him[15]." She also mentions the Duke and Duchess of Windsor, who lived at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel and whose marriage Tantine considered "real." The Windsors were friends of her cousin Spence Burton, Bishop of Nassau. She wrote: "I've always felt [the Duke's]

marriage was a spiritual gesture. I sent them Emerson on their marriage....[16]" There was also George Bernard Shaw, who, as mentioned earlier, had often visited her at Hall's Croft. On September 18, 1944 she wrote to Lady Sandwich:

[On Bernard Shaw's 88th birthday] I wrote to him saying we were both in the category of the 80's, he taking much exercise and I none, and at once I got a [postcard] from him in his *beautiful* writing: "My dear Josephine, How very jolly to hear from you. I have been a widower since 12th Sept last. A little before that we were talking about you and wondering what had become of you. You were and are a special friend; and we always hoped that we should foregather again at Hall's Croft. But I am better out of sight now. I'm dreadfully old. G. Bernard Shaw."

Of course I answered at once, saying, in this new world there would be much for us to do[17].

There are many references of historical interest to devotees; for example, Tantine's meeting a man who as a school boy had heard Swami Vivekananda lecture in Valparaiso, Indiana, to l,000 people[18], (now established as February 27, 1894)[19]. She also refers to a Mr. Burroughs, who spoke on spiritual subjects, and who "as a boy knew Swamiji," and a lady who had a signed photo of Vivekananda[20]. Tantine spent time with Malvina Hoffman, the famous sculptor who made busts of Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Sarada Devi, and Swami Vivekananda. Tantine writes that "she saw Swamiji when 8 or 9 years old in a boarding house on 38th Street, so we formed a real relationship[21]." She also mentions on May 6, 1940, that Swami Nikhilananda had just received thirty-five hundred dollars from an Italian prince who had learned the swami needed money to publish his translation of *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* on which he and Margaret Wilson had been working for years[22].

[1] Whitmarsh, 1986.
[2] Wedell Coll., June 7, 1938.
[3] Whitmarsh, 1986.
[4] Wedell Coll., June 7, 1938.
[5] Whitmarsh, 1986.
[6] Whitmarsh, 1983.
[7] Whitmarsh, 1983.
[8] Late and Soon, p. 40.
[9] Whitmarsh, 1986 .
[10] Whitmarsh, 1979.
[11] Whitmarsh, 1983.
[12] Whitmarsh, 1983.
[13] Culme-Seymour Coll., October 8, 1940
[14] Culme-Seymour Coll, March 7, 1941.
[15] Culme-Seymour Coll, February 25, 1941.
[16] Culme-Seymour Coll, October 26, 1944.
[17] Culme-Seymour Coll, September 18, 1944.
[18] Culme-Seymour Coll, July 9, 1940.
[19] Marie Louise Burke, "The Cyclonic Hindu," VK, January 1996, p. 9 and "Footnote to Valparaiso," VK, July 1996, p. 264.
[20] Culme-Seymour Coll., May 2, 1941.
[21] Culme-Seymour Coll, May 9, 1941.
[22] Culme-Seymour Coll, May 6, 1940.

THE CONSTANT FLAME

In 1940 Tantine began preparing for death. Writing to Swami Atulananda, she said:
I love to think that Nivedita was right when she defined [Destiny] as "Opportunity". Every day we are making our own -- making our destiny. Mine occurred 45 years ago on Jan. 29 when I recognized Swamiji, or, as beloved Drogo [Montagu] put it when he was five years old, "I mean the day Tantine found her own soul." So true, yet only a child could put it so clearly.
Today I received from Rosehill Cemetery in Chicago the exact number of our plot of land where my father and mother are buried, for I think I'll have my ashes put there. What could be more appropriate than to be in the same city where Swamiji broadcast His message in 1893? Each day brings something new -- unprepared, and to face these new conditions keeps one alert and alive.[1]
In 1943 she ordered her own grave marker to be made of Indiana limestone and engraved with Shakes-peare's words (as she had always wanted), "The readiness is all." Indeed she seemed to look upon death as a grand adventure, another new beginning; and when she heard that someone had died, she would smile and say, "Good for him!"[2]
On her eighty-sixth birthday in 1944 someone gave her a lovely birthday party, and she wrote of it to her friends in India. Swami Atulananda later reported to a friend: "She sat for 3 l/2 hours on the soft sofa without getting up, and was not tired. She wore a lovely crimson satin long dress, with red coat trimmed with chinchilla fur, and a lace hat. About 100 people came."[3]
It is often the American way to latch onto new things or ideas, burn brightly with enthusiasm for a time, then lose all interest in them. Tantine's enthusiasm for Vivekananda, Vedanta, and India was sincere. It never burned out. In this last decade of her life she continued to serve the Rama-krishna Order and Vedanta Societies in the West. One way in which she served was by passing onto others vivid glimpses of the great Swamiji. This she did spontaneously whenever the opportunity was at hand.
Once she wrote to the Countess of Sandwich about an incident she had recently been told: "Two Americans were sent out to India by missionaries to offset Swamiji's influence. When they arrived, Swamiji was deep in meditation, but when he finally appeared, his face radiating the light his meditation had given him, they were so overcome that they turned to Swamiji, asking, 'Where shall we find Truth?' Swamiji's answer: 'But it is with you always' -- turning them into disciples."[4]
To Lady Sandwich: "Did I tell you that when I told Swami A. that Swamiji had said I was his Shakti [power], A. answered, 'Oh, I've known that since 1912, when Swami Premananda told me', so Swamiji himself must have told Premananda."[5]
And again to Lady Sandwich: "As Swamiji put it, 'Don't fight your faults; fill yourself with something else; then they will drop off, not being nourished[6].'" "[Swami Vivekananda said]: 'Adjust the microcosm, which it is in your power to do, and the macrocosm must adjust itself to you.'... I do not feel called upon to adjust the world's problems, but my own little intimate one, a narrow one, limited by my physical strength, first, then the moral and spiritual values as *I* see them. This is the reason I said to Swamiji, 'I've never done an unselfish act in my life.' And he answered, 'True, but there is a larger or a smaller self!'... If I can expand, like loving others, it is *I* that expand, isn't it? And the more I expand and love others, the more I represent the Lord, the One, unique[7]."
On July 10, 1943, she was at Ridgely; and her great-nephew Paul Sturges, son of Hollister and Jeanne Sturges, had a new phonograph recording machine he wanted to test. He asked Tantine to help him out by speaking for a few minutes into the machine. Momentarily she was at a loss for words, and asked, "What shall I say?" Then she quickly recovered, said, "Oh, I know,"[8] and began by quoting Swamiji, who said: "Remember who you are. Never forget just who you are[9]." Then Tantine continued:

They [holy men] do not give the same thought to everybody; it depends on your evolution. If you are ready, when you are ready, the teacher comes. It's your readiness that calls him. So when Swamiji came to America, and we went to hear him on the 29th of January, 1895, having read the Gita, Betty and I seemed to be ready, because from that hour, life had another purpose, because it gave that strength that is within one, not what is without.... Then when Mr. Leggett met him, he said, "That's the greatest man I ever saw." And somebody said to him, "Why do you say that, Mr. Leggett?" He said, "Because he has more common sense."

Religion is not a queer thing -- it is the development of the highest side of one's life, and Swamiji was such fun! There was such joy in him! He knew he was divine and because he was that, he could pass it on. You can only -- If you have money, you can give money; if you have spirituality, you can give that. You can only give what you yourself have earned.... So the children have got to carry on. Swamiji used to say: "Give your heart to the Lord when you are young. Then you'll carry many over."

And he said: "Never forget who you are. Incidentally you are an American and a woman, but always you are a child of God. That's your birthright. Incidentally you are an American and a woman. And so tell yourself that incessantly. Till you get the courage that comes, know that there is this power within you as well as without."

"Thou art the supreme goal of all knowledge. Thou art the eternal supreme support of the universe. Thou art changeless, the protector of the unchanging law of righteousness. Thou art the eternal spirit. This is my faith." Bhagavad Gita, eleventh chapter.

Never try to change a person. Take them where they are and give them a push onward. They must develop according to their nature. It's for you never to upset anyone else. You see there's the difference. They don't want to change you. Swamiji never touched___[10]

It is interesting to note that when Tantine quoted here from the eleventh chapter, eighteenth verse, of the Gita, it was Mohini Chatterji's translation that she remembered, showing that she did "get it by heart," as she always claimed.

Three months later she wrote an inspiring letter to Lady Sandwich in which she told the story of Sri Rama-krishna's seeing Swami Vivekananda before he was born. On October 6, 1943, she wrote:

It seems I am the last living person who knew Swamiji *well, personally*. This year being the 50th anniversary of Swamiji's coming to USA, Chicago, July 1893, each Vedanta Center is to celebrate this, and Nikhilananda wants me to give a little talk at his Center, 17 E. 94th St., and Swami Virajananda, the Abbot of the Math, wrote in his last letter, "that Tantine has kept alive all these 48 years the vividness of Swamiji shows His spirituality". Ramakrishna's vision of seeing 6 [actually seven] sages in meditation between the Absolute and the relative and a little child whispering over and over again in the ear of one of the sages, till finally the Sage opened his eyes, and the light of his eyes fell on the house Swamiji was born in -- that only a little of Swamiji had come; had all his spirituality come, it would have been enough to burn the world, and that whenever Swamiji knew who He was he would no longer stay on earth. On July 4th, 1902 Swamiji spent 3 hours alone, in Ramakrishna's chapel at Belur, and that night he went out in meditation.

This is what I've always felt, that Swamiji was the great Sage that Ramakrishna brought to earth.

... Today I made the necessary signature to be able to vote for our next President. Though this world *belongs to the Lord*, we must register, mustn't we?[11]

It is of note that with all Josephine MacLeod accomplished in her life, she, being a woman, had only had the right to vote in the United States since 1920. At that time she was sixty-two years old.

[1] With the Swamis, pp. 295-96.[2] Whitmarsh, 1983.[3] Friends Coll.: Letter of Swami Atulananda, June 16, 1945[4] Culme-Seymour Coll., February 9, 1939.[5] Culme-Seymour Coll, February 9 [1971, 1939.[6] Culme-Seymour Coll, March 27, 1939.

[7] Culme-Seymour Coll, March 22, 1940.[8] Magdalena Sturges, interview with author, July

30, 1990.[9] Magdalena Sturges, interview with author, July 30, 1990.
[10] MacLeod recording, July 10, 1943.
[11] Culme-Seymour Coll., October 6, 1943

SWAMIJI's UNIVERSITY

Tantine earnestly believed in the dream Vivekananda had had of a great institution of learning in India, and this had become a reality in 1941. As mentioned in Chapter Six, Tantine had given Rs. 10,000 for establishing the Sanskrit Chair; Rs. 10,000 for the dairy education section; and Rs. 10,000 for affiliation with Calcutta University. A letter from Swami Vimuktananda to Tantine on May 18, 1943, gives an idea of the role she continued to play. He wrote:

Last July I cabled to you to let you know what great help it was in the cause of Swamiji's University to receive from you Rs. 7000 -- at the time when it was most needed. This timely help has encouraged us all and it was proved beyond doubt that the technical section is sure to succeed. And dear Tantine, since then we have been able to collect some more money and now we have got four buildings and a good number of equipment for the training of the boys.... I am trying my best to equip this section with some up-to-date machinery, tools, and apparatus so that the boys may be given a thorough training in various departments of technology. I wish that the boys should be self-supporting from the very beginning....

Tantine, you will be delighted to know that the first batch of 19 boys of our general college section has appeared in their final Intermediate Examination last April. They will go out next July after two years of training in Swamiji's University. All of them have greatly improved both in body & mind and have shown a special aptitude for Swamiji's ideal in life....

The cows of the Math are excellent. Rama has half filled up the cowshed....[1]

On July 4, 1943, Swami Vimuktananda again wrote to Tantine about the achievements of the students in the college:

Two years have elapsed since Swamiji's university was started. This year the first batch of our boys appeared [at Calcutta University] for the last examination, and all but three came out successful. One of them standing 10th in order of merit among ten thousand boys.... Besides the University curriculum the boys have been trained in the traditional way of "Guru Kula Vasa", living with the teachers & moving with them & thus imbibing what is best in them.[2]

At this point, according to the letter, the college consisted of a General Section, a Technical Section, and an Oriental Section.

Further news of the Ramakrishna Order came to Tantine from Swami Abhayananda, who wrote to her on May 16, 1943:

Recently we opened a new home for poor students in Calcutta, donated by a kind gentleman. Also the peaceful spot called "Yogodyan" at Kankurgachi, near Calcutta, has come under our possession. It is a holy spot where Sri Rama-krishna went several times and himself spoke very highly of it. The Institute of Culture which was till recently in its old premises has shifted to a spacious house at 4, Wellington Square, Calcutta. It is very near Advaita Ashrama (publication dept)....[3]

The swami then informed Tantine of the death of Swami Srivasananda, of whom she had been so fond. From the beginning of his association with the Ramakrishna Order in 1926, Tantine had been interested in him because of his connection with the Maharaja of Mysore, whose father had been in power when Swami Vivekananda was alive. Swamiji had written to the Maharaja an often-quoted letter. Tantine had mentioned all of this many years before, on March 3, 1926, when she had been staying at Belur. Writing to Lady Sandwich she had stated:

Now [in 1926] after 30 years, its looks as though the Maharaja of Mysore would respond to Swamiji's call to his father -- "My noble prince, this life is short, the vanities of the world are transient, but they alone live who live for others, the rest are more dead than alive. One such high, noble-minded and royal son of India as your Highness, can do much towards raising India on her feet again, and leave a name to posterity which shall be worshipped. That the Lord may

make your noble heart feel intensely for the suffering millions of India, sunk in ignorance, is the prayer of -- Vivekananda “,
for just lately the tutor of this present Maharaja and his brother and heir, called Yuvaraj, has joined this order. So their personal interest is awakened. Both of them have been here and [to the Math].... It’s such fun to see the pattern being woven, and only be responsible for one’s own little thread and keep it straight and unknotted so that it can be *used*.[4]
Then during her last stay in India, she had written to Lady Sandwich, December 7, 1938:
Swami Srivasananda I’m seeing most of now. He saw Swamiji in 1897 ... and Swamiji said to him, “Will you follow me?” He said, “Someday. Not yet.” So he made his career tutor to the Maharaja and Yuvaraj of Mysore, became Head of the Cooperative Bank and governor of one of the Mysore Provinces and he is here now, meaning to start a Vedanta College in connection with this Math. Splendid mind -- cultivated -- I much enjoy him.[5]
Swami Srivasananda had been head of the Oriental Section of Swamiji’s University during the first eighteen months or so of its existence.[6]
Today this three-year degree institution is known as Vidyamandir. There are three technical institutes, a post-graduate teachers training college, and other institutions associated with it. The thousands of rupees which Tantine donated helped to establish the firm base from which this large educational complex has flourished.

[1] Courtesy of Vivekananda Vedanta Society (Chicago).
[2] Courtesy of Vivekananda Vedanta Society (Chicago).
[3] Courtesy of Vivekananda Vedanta Society (Chicago).
[4] Culmc-Scymour Coll., March 3, 1926.
[5] Culmc-Scymour Coll., March 3, 1926.
[6] Letter of Swami Abhayananda to Josephine Macleod, May 16, 1943, courtesy of Viveka nanda Vedanta Society (Chi cago).

CAGING A LOVELY BIRD

During the 1940s Tantine clung to her independence and maintained herself at the Barbizon-Plaza, making do with short but frequent trips to California, though they were tiring three-day journeys by train. “She did not like to stay anywhere longer than two weeks,” Katherine Whitmarsh later recalled. “She’d ask me, ‘How long have I been here in Hollywood?’ and I’d tell her, ‘Oh, a week or so.’ I knew that if I said she’d been there two weeks, she’d leave.”[1] Apparently Tantine still felt she had work to do for Swamiji, and she was right.

In 1947 Tantine helped Swami Nikhilananda find Miss Dutcher’s cottage at Thousand Island Park where Swami Vivekananda had given his *Inspired Talks* in the summer of 1895. She put Swami Nikhilananda in touch with Mrs. Emerson Cox, who as a child had been a ward of Miss Dutcher, Vivekananda’s host. Her son, George Cox, took Swami Nikhilananda and a few Vedanta students to the cottage. They found it in utter disrepair, but the swami felt it was worth saving. The cottage was soon acquired, and restoration was begun in the early spring of 1948. It was dedicated in July of that year, with Swamis Asesha-nanda, Satprakashananda, Yatiswarananda, and Nikhilananda spending the summer there[2]. It is considered a holy place by devotees and is used as a retreat.

On October 1, 1948, Romain Rolland’s sister, Madeleine, wrote to Tantine about her brother’s death in December of 1944. She then asked for Tantine’s help in collecting his correspondence, to be deposited in the Archives of Romain Rolland in the Bibliotheque Ste. [Genevieve] in Paris. “In the United States,” she wrote, “the director of Harvard Library has had the kindness to offer us a center to which American friends may send the letters received by them from RR and he has them microfilmed before sending them back to the correspondents[3].” Apparently, Tantine did not respond to this request. However, Tantine’s letters to Romain Rolland and his sister were collected by Madeleine Rolland, and they are preserved in the Bibliotheque nationale de France.

In the meantime, Swami Prabhavananda was urging Tantine to move permanently to the Hollywood center, where she could live in the company of Sister Lalita (Carrie Mead Wyckoff), Ujjvala (Ida Ansell), and the women monastics who had begun to join the Society. Tantine’s letters to the Countess of Sandwich, written from Hollywood in 1948, indicate a tug-of-war between her fiercely restless, independent nature and her family’s loving concern for her welfare. It was becoming obvious that at her age, she should not live alone, and it was very difficult to keep Tantine in one place. Then a coincidental situation developed when for some reason the Barbizon-Plaza could no longer guarantee to keep Room 1811 for her use. From Hollywood, she wrote to Lady Sandwich on March 15, 1948:

Here I am still with no plan of returning to the Barbizon-Plaza -- since they do not let me know whether I can get my beloved old room 1811 back again! It really is heavenly here -- with my delicious breakfast of apple-egg-toast and coffee brought to me as I wake at 6:30 AM and then the fine Swami Prabhavananda wanting me to *live* here -- since I was a great friend of Swamiji Vivekananda.... They always give me the ... room overlooking the lovely rose gardens -- so it’s really like home here -- & dear Swami Prabhavananda -- The Greatest Saint I know.[4]

And on June 1, 1948, she wrote again to her:

I have several letters from you urging me not to return to the Barbizon-Plaza -- til I *know* that my dear old room 1811 is *free*. But I am leaving here on June 4 to go to the Barbizon-Plaza on June 7 -- though I have no guarantee that I will find my old room 1811 free. I have been here over 2 weeks! content -- happy -- They urge me to stay on -- indefinitely or even always!... You see I am constitutionally *restless*! So just let me do as I choose! and accept me as I am. *I am very well* with no organ in my body ill. I will be 90 years old my next birthday. As the Lord does not seem to want me in Heaven, I am likely to continue my same life! I may return here for Prabhavananda’s & my birthday December 26 -- or I may not. I’ve loved every hour here -- & yet I am restless -- Heart’s love -- from your loving & restless Tantine Jojo.[5]

A letter written by Tantine to Swami Prabhavananda indicates that as of January 15, 1949, she was back at the Barbizon-Plaza in New York City. After fifty-four years (that is, since January 1895) her mind was still centered on Swami Vivekananda. She wrote:

My very dear Swami Prabhavananda,
Do you know the *Prophets of New India* by Romain Rolland? [*This was a combined and re-translated edition of Rolland's two books on Ramakrishna and Vivekananda*.] I am reading it now -- It shows the long process of Swamiji to get himself ready -- for the work he was to do! I am *wondering* and hoping that since I at 90 do not expect to go to *Kali*fornia soon -- perhaps you would come here, would you? I think you could stay at Swami Nikhilananda's center ... while he is in India. I do keep very well! -- with no physical pain. The papers tell of your cold in Kalifornia -- Here it is *sunny* and *cold* -- grand weather!
Always with love and devotion -- Yours -- Tantine Jojo[6]
Finally the end of Tantine's freedom came. Katherine Whitmarsh later recalled that one day she was in New York, lunching with Frances Leggett, and Frances told her that the family was considering a rest home for Tantine; that they felt she was no longer able to care for herself. "I went back to California and told Swami Prabhavananda. He said to me: 'We can't let that happen. She's done too much for Swamiji and India. Bring her out here.'"[7]
That was in the spring of 1949. Tantine paid one "last visit" to Ridgely. "Actually," says Magdalena Sturges, who at that time was living in the Big Cottage at Ridgely, "Tantine paid several 'last visits' to Ridgely, always thinking that she might not come back to New York. She would go and visit each of the buildings -- the Manor house, the Inn, the Little Cottage where Swami Vivekananda had lived, the Big Cottage, the Casino -- and all the staff, and would say good-bye."[8]
Tantine refused to let anyone accompany her to California, but there was a large crowd of her friends at Grand Central Station to see her off. Her cousin, Spence Burton, Bishop of Nassau, came to help her get on the train. When Tantine saw the long line of people waiting to go through the ticket gate, she said to him, "Open your jacket and show your purple [clerical vestment]." When he did so, the gatekeeper immediately said, "Monsignor!" and let them through. Bishop Burton then quietly tipped the train porter and the conductor to see to it that this elderly woman, travelling alone, received a little extra individual attention. When it was time to get on the train, Tantine tipped Bishop Burton fifty cents, and this became one of his all-time great stories about Tantine.[9]
"I *love* sudden things," Tantine had once written, "-- no preparation -- pre-occupation, just sudden! I hope death will come that way.... Just wake up and find oneself in Heaven. As long as the body doesn't pain one, then earth isn't bad -- but to cling to a body -- when it has served its purpose, I hope I shall never do!"[10]
Tantine, writing the above to Theodore Whitmarsh in May of 1926 never changed her mind about the matter. Perhaps remembering her own father's death, she had written to Lady Sandwich in 1938, "Life is a great adventure and Death a bigger one. So when I'm dying I don't want to be watched and troubled with the family or friends, but just *free* to go or come[11]." And where does one go to get freedom? One goes home. One goes where one feels most comfortable. For Tantine, at the very end of her life, that home was the Vedanta Society in Hollywood, with Swami Prabhavananda and the devotees. Sister Lalita and Ujjvala with whom she had a shared the bond of close association with Swami Vivekananda were there, and there were now a number of young nuns who had dedicated their lives to the ideals of Ramakrishna, Holy Mother, and Vivekananda. These were her spiritual relatives, her other family.
"I've come home to die," she said to Swami Prabhava-nanda when she arrived there for the final time.[12]

Two young women who joined the convent of the Vedanta Society of Southern California in the 1940s later became Pravrajikas Prabhaprana and Baradaprana. Their reminiscences of Tantine help to form a picture of her last years.

Pravrajika Prabhaprana: I remember when I first met Tantine. She was telling these people in the living room of the center about Vivekananda in 1893 at the Parliament of Religions. "When he got up to speak," she said, "and said, 'Sisters and Brothers of America,' seven thousand people rose to their feet!" I just got goosebumps listening to her. It was wonderful! She just made you feel you were right there at the Parliament. She was very, very fond of Swamiji, and she never lost that.

Swami Prabhavananda had the greatest regard for Tantine. He always showed her such respect because he was so well aware of everything she had been.

She had an awfully strong will. She was very autocratic. Even with Swami Prabhavananda she tended to be that way. With the other devotees, her demeanor was very much in the grand manner. She was very erect. Straight as an arrow, even at ninety. She was just marvelously erect. And very thin.

The funny thing was that even with her indigestion problems, she wanted lobster thermidore everyday. I happened to be the only one who knew how to make it, so I did; and she ate it everyday.

To me, the exceptional thing about Tantine is that in her era, the Turn of the Century, she was strong enough to identify herself with India and the Indian Movement, regardless of what others may have thought. I admire that. It took a strong will, and it took devotion. I'm sure she could undertake any journey and face any struggle. She never wavered in her devotion and dedication. It was there to the end.

At the Hollywood centre, she would touch each of the pictures of Ramakrishna, Holy Mother, Swami Vivekananda, and Maharaj [Swami Brahmananda], and when she would touch them, she'd say, "They're all here." But I would not say she made any outer demonstration of her devotion. That she kept very private from what I could see.

She was extremely independent. I think her independence started when she was a child and never stopped. She was a law unto herself.

Tantine had quite a pull for New York because every afternoon Swami Krishnananda would take her for a drive and she'd want him to drive her to New York. That yearning she had to get away and move and not stay in one place too long seemed to be with her till the end.[13]

Pravrajika Baradaprana: Tantine didn't seem the meditative type. She was active. She would give to people -- do for people; and she would get things done in an autocratic way. Anybody who she thought was a little bit needy or worthy she gave to.

There was nothing I could see to indicate that she practised much in the way of spiritual disciplines.

She felt that Swami Prabhavananda reminded her, in his dynamic, fiery side, of Swami Vivekananda. She had great rapport with him, and she had great respect for him. That's why she liked to come to Hollywood.[14]

Another person who knew Tantine briefly when he first came to the Vedanta Society of Southern California was Swami Vidyatmananda (then, John Yale). In an article for "The Living Presence" series, published in *Vedanta Kesari*, he told about his contact with Tantine:

Miss MacLeod was residing at the Hollywood centre when I first attended services there; and there she died a few months after Sister [Lalita -- Carrie Mead Wyckoff] died, in the autumn of 1949. Tall and extremely thin, with a deeply sallow skin, Miss MacLeod seemed very old to me -- as indeed she was. She had been a genuine eccentric -- the kind of person who does original, appropriate things without thought of self or consequences. There was a trace of that old strength in her still. On the several times when I saw her I looked upon Miss MacLeod as a most precious relic, because of her deep friendship with Vivekananda and all that she had done to advance his work. Just think, it was to Miss MacLeod that he had addressed the words in his last letter to her: "You have been a good angel to me!" and a short time before: "... and to you, dear Joe, Pranams."[15]

(A *pranam* is a very respectful, reverent form of salutation, usually reserved for a holy image or holy person.)

Later, in his book *A Yankee and the Swamis*, Swami Vidyatmananda wrote: "How many articles have been written, and resolutions taken, endorsing East-West synthesis! But Tantine was a living example of it -- one of the first thoroughly international Western persons of this new age."[16]

Katherine Whitmarsh, who was so close to Tantine and who continued to try to help her after she moved to California, gave her reminiscences of Tantine's last days and her time with Swami Prabhavananda. Katherine was looked to for support by Swami Prabhavananda, as one sees in the following reminiscences, which show how difficult it sometimes was to help someone as fiercely independent and willful as Tantine:

Tantine had known Swami Prabhavananda in India, and she called him "my boy." She and Sister Lalita [Carrie Mead Wyckoff] were such a study in contrast. Tantine was all fiery and Sister was all peace. Both were saintly, and I loved them both, but how different they were!

Tantine used to say, "I don't know why the Lord keeps this old bag of bones around." And one time she fell and broke her arm. At the hospital I asked the doctor, "Can you set her arm?" He looked at me and said: "I could easily take two fingers and break every bone in her body. There's nothing there. How she walks around, I don't know." You see, she lived on willpower. And how do you deal with someone like that?

At the hospital, they tried to help Tantine [with her broken arm], but she wouldn't hold still. I went to her room and saw that they had put restraints on her. The nurse said to me, "We can't set her arm unless we can keep her still, and she won't stay still for us." Then I said to Tantine, "If you promise to be good and not move and let them set your arm, I'll come for you and we'll go back to the Vedanta center. Will you be good?" And Tantine said, "Yes." I asked the nurse to trust her.

The next morning I went back to get Tantine. I had an ambulance waiting for her. I knew she wouldn't like that since Tantine never spent money on cabs. So I said to her, "Tantine, I have an ambulance for you, but if you can get up and get dressed by yourself I'll send it away." Well, of course she couldn't do that, so the nurse and I helped her dress and got her out to the ambulance. She looked it over and asked: "What kind of ambulance is this? What kind of car?" "A Cadillac," I told her; and she said: "Why, that's right. It's a Cadillac." She was always alert and interested in things, you see.

Tantine had the idea that one should never stay anyplace more than two weeks, which made it difficult for Swami Prabhavananda, because she was always trying to run away. She'd be in a car, and in the middle of traffic as soon as the car stopped, she'd open the door and hop out. She was just simply a free spirit. Trying to keep her in one place was like taking a lovely, large bird and trying to cage it. Poor thing.

It was very difficult for the swami, and one day he and I talked about finding a Rest Home for Tantine to go into. We went out one hot day and looked at Homes and finally found one. Then we didn't have the courage to take her there. I said, "Swami, you take her," and he said, "No, you take her." So then we got Sister Amiya to take her!

It wasn't long before the Home called us and said: "We can't do anything with her. You'll have to come and take her back." So we drove over there, and Swami said to me, "You go in." So I did. It was a very hot day and I asked the nurse to please get me a glass of water. I wanted to calm down enough to face Tantine. She gave me ice water which made me sick, and I went into an empty room and lay down on a bed to rest a few minutes. All of a sudden who should come into the room but Tantine. How she knew I was there, I have no idea. And she said to me: "Good for you! You found me. Isn't this wonderful? Aren't you clever?" Then she said to me, "I think they'll soon be here." I said: "Good. Who?" She said: "Why, Swamiji and Francey [Frank Leggett]. They'll be here in a carriage any moment now."

When she saw Swami Prabhavananda in the car outside, she said, "My child, you found me. Wonderful!" I said to her, "Tantine, you have to be good if you go back to the Vedanta center.

You have to promise you won't run away." "I won't," she said. So we took her back and she didn't run away again.
Tantine used to say, "Swamiji gave me freedom. He didn't initiate me, he didn't do anything, but he gave me freedom!"[17]

[1] Whitmarsh, 1979.
[2] Malcolm Willis, "Historical Sketch of Vivekananda Cottage at Thousand Island Park, New York," VK, August 1963, pp. 254-55.
[3] Friends Coll.
[4] Courtesy of Swami Chetanananda.
[5] Courtesy of Swami Chetanananda.
[6] Courtesy of Swami Chetanananda.
[7] Whitmarsh, 1986.
[8] Magdalena Sturges, interview with author, July 30, 1990.
[9] Whitmarsh, 1986.
[10] Friends Coll., to Theodore Whitmarsh, May 1926.
[11] Culme-Seymour Coll., October 22, 1938.
[12] Sister Amiya, "Josephine Macleod" (Obituary), V and W, Jan- Feb 1950, p. 30.
[13] Pravrajika Prabhaprana, inter view with author, August 5, 1988.
[14] Pravrajika Baradaprana, inter view with author, August 5, 1988.
[15] Swami Vidyatmananda, "Living Presence," VK, April 1988, p. 143.
[16] Swami Vidyatmananda, A Yankee and the Swamis, p. 18.
[17] Whitmarsh, 1979, 1983, 1986.

FRIEND AND DISCIPLE (TANTINE PRESIDES) (Part Two)

"Secure in God, in time serene. Above distress, yet ever aware, presides Tantine."
-- *Phyllis Ackerman*[1]

"Do get well -- and live to be 90 -- or I die of grief[2]!" So Sister Nivedita had written to her beloved "Yum" on December 26, 1910--which had been Josephine MacLeod's fifty-second birthday. Now, in the fall of 1949, she was ninety years old, but only fifty-four spiritually. Her body, however, really *was* ninety, and as the doctor had said when she broke her arm, she had been living on sheer willpower; her bones were so brittle. From that time on, she could no longer walk and was confined to bed at the Hollywood center[3]. On October 11, Swami Prabhavananda and four of the nuns left California for a visit to India. Before the swami left the center, he went into Tantine's room and said good-bye to her. She thought he was Swami Vivekananda.[4]

Three days later a devotee at the Hollywood Vedanta center telephoned Katherine Whitmarsh in Santa Barbara, which was more than an hour's drive from Hollywood, and told her that Tantine was dying. Katherine Whitmarsh later recalled:

The devotee said, "You won't get here in time," and I said: "I will. Tantine isn't going to do anything as quickly as you think she is!" And I got there in plenty of time.

When Tantine saw me, she said: "Oh, good. I'm glad you've come."

And that was it. We sat all evening with her until she died. She never spoke again. She died very smoothly; very calmly. She just sort of faded away[5].

Tantine's death at one o'clock on the morning of October 15, 1949, followed that of Sister Lalita, just three months earlier, on July 23. The reader may recall that after her father's death in a Catholic hospital, tended by "angel nuns," Josephine MacLeod had expressed the desire to "die in just such a place where the prayers of loving women would sustain" her and she would be "cared for by those consecrated to their vocation and not who thought only of their two hours' off daily[6]." In death as well as in a great deal of her life, Tantine had been blessed with getting what she wanted.

Since Swami Prabhavananda was out of the country, his young assistant, Swami Aseshananda, performed the Memorial Service for Tantine. The swami considered this a great honor, and once wrote about her:

I used to visit Miss MacLeod at the Barbizon-Plaza ... when I was associated with the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center in New York City. She was very gracious to me because I had been an attendant of Swami Saradananda. A world traveller and full of vitality to the very end, she brimmed with the desire and with ideas for helping India and our Order; her inspiration resulted in Vedanta Centers in France and Argentina. We younger monks called her Tantine because she was like a great-aunt to us all[7].

The Memorial Service program included reading the second chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita*, which describes the glorious and immortal nature of the Atman -- the real Self. Swami Yogeshananda, who had not met Tantine, arrived for the first time at the Hollywood center just before her Service. "At the Service," he once wrote, "her body was laid out in a white gown, giving her something of the look of the photos of Sister Nivedita. Her rosary had been placed in her hands, and it all made for a very dignified and uplifting impression[]8."

Then began the accolades for this unusual woman, who in just ten weeks would have been ninety-one years old. Obituaries were written and published in newspapers as well as three Vedanta journals; swamis of the Ramakrishna Order wrote to her family and to devotees who had known her; friends of Tantine wrote to other friends. Her reminiscences were published in *Prabuddha Bharata*, and in the 1970s many of her letters were published in *Prabuddha Bharata* and *Vedanta Kesari*. Excerpts from obituaries follow:

from *Prabuddha Bharata*, November 1949:

The death of Tantine removes an inspiring figure and an important landmark in the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda movement. The loss will be widely felt and grieved. She meant so much to so many for so long.

We have not received, at the time of writing, details of her last days; they will come in time and will doubtless make a glorious finale to her long life of purity, love, and dedication to the cause of Swami Vivekananda....

Miss Josephine MacLeod formed for long a most vivid link with Swami Vivekananda. Though she disclaimed formal discipleship, she was full of Swamiji all her life and consistently served his cause with remarkable loyalty and devotion. Friend or guru, Swamiji, from the day she first met him, filled her life in a way as nothing else did. Perhaps according to her ideas and the ideas of her society, friendship means much more than guruhood, a relation of the most intimate character....

She was in touch with Swamiji for seven years and helped him in numerous ways in his mission to the West. The Swami has referred to her services in glowing words and ever remained grateful for them. Some of the Swami's most inspiring and magnificent letters were written to her.

Tantine truly recalled something of Swamiji's spirit vividly to all those who met her. Because of her love of Swamiji, the monastic members [of the Ramakrishna Order] felt her as one of them, and this was remarkable in those days when so much stood between a correct understanding of East and West. She was always self-reliant and retained wonderful vigour till her extreme old age. She always left upon one the impression that she was full of Swamiji and that she always tried her best to radiate Swamiji's strength, love, and purity to all who came in contact with her. She came to India for the last time before the [Second World War], and though she hoped to come again, age and other things prevented it. But in America she continued til her end to be a source of great inspiration and help to the Swamis of the Vedanta Centres in that country.

An inspiring life of purity, love and service has come to a quiet close, but her memory will ever remain green wherever Swami Vivekananda will be read and loved[9].

About her reminiscences of Swami Vivekananda, which *Prabuddha Bharata* published in full in its December 1949 issue, the editor stated:

The document is both as regards style and substance, unusually vivid and striking; it is invigorating like a fresh breeze from the Himalayas, and has the inspiring effect of a deep meditation upon you. This is so because it reflects Truth which was Swamiji, and which is ever strengthening to the soul. It gives fresh glimpses of the depth and breadth of that profound and versatile personality, Vivekananda, whose tremendous power and charm are so uncommon as to be beyond the imagination of men like us, accustomed to seeing the men we see[10].

from *Vedanta Kesari*, November 1949:

At the time of death [Tantine] was 91. But she herself counted her age from the time she met Swami Vivekananda in America in 1895.... Her great love for Swamiji cannot be described in words. She lived, moved and had her being in Swamiji, as it were, always talking -- and that with unabat-ing enthusiasm -- of her Master. And how much vigour and strength were in those talks! Anyone who even casually listened to her words, would catch through them a glimpse of the Fire that was Swami Vivekananda....

She was a tower of strength to Swamiji in managing the organization side of preaching work in a strange and foreign land. Her contribution to the Indian work of Swamiji was also by no means small. When she became a follower of Swami Vivekananda she once asked him, "What should I do now, Swamiji?" "Love India," came the spontaneous reply from that great patriot saint of India. Since then her life was dedicated to God and to the service of India. When she wanted to visit India for the first time, Swamiji said, "Come only if you have genuine love and

sympathy for India. Otherwise not. For we cannot afford to bear one more single word of criticism from the Westerners....” And she came.

She helped not only the Ramakrishna Mission work, but any activity, organized by anyone, likely to conduce to the good of India received her joyous support. Sometimes she would go out of her way to serve the cause of India....

Whoever met Tantine will remember her as a powerful personality, full of strength, one who could inspire courage and enthusiasm even to a drooping spirit, a great lover of India, and above all, an ardent disciple of Swami Vivekananda[11].

from *Vedanta and the West*, January-February 1950, by Sister Amiya:

In the early hours of the morning of October 15, 1949, there went out from among us one of the most influential and helpful friends the Ramakrishna Mission of India has ever found in the West; and the loss of such a friend will be keenly felt and sincerely mourned, not only by the members of the [Ramakrishna] Mission, but also by her relatives, and by the many others who owe her so much....

Between [Swami Vivekananda] and the older American woman there was a mutual recognition of purity and great strength, for it is well known that he held Tantine in the highest esteem, and relied greatly upon her judgment in many matters pertaining to the world and his work in it. “We had such *fun*!” she would say. “Such fun!” And a faraway look would come into her eyes as she recalled again her remarkable relationship with that noble, majestic young monk who had come into her life for so brief a period more than fifty years ago.

Although their mortal relationship was terminated by the Swami’s early death, the seed he sowed did not die, and Tantine lived on to foster its growth. She made his plans her own and for the remainder of her life she fought valiantly against the many obstacles raised against their fulfillment, and won many a battle in the interest and for the permanent benefit of the Ramakrishna Mission which the Swami had founded and had struggled so hard to maintain.

[From her haven of peace in the Belur Guest House], she travelled to all parts of Europe and America, sparing neither effort nor expense in helping to spread the ideals of her beloved Swamiji....

The most outstanding characteristic of this great woman was her tremendous will. Nothing on earth could conquer it. It was indomitable and inviolate. During the later years of her life she developed an extraordinary affection and esteem for Swami Prabhavananda and his work as founder and head of the Vedanta Society of Southern California. Although she lived alone in New York and enjoyed utter independence, Swami Prabhavananda and his center in Hollywood became to her an irresistible magnet, and because her will could not withstand their drawing power, she came often to California, against the terrific odds of a long and trying journey and the feebleness of an aging body....

It was but right and fitting that she should spend her last days in the “Vivekananda Home” and give the privilege of service to those who had dedicated their lives to the cause she had served so well.

Our sympathy goes out to all who loved her, and particularly to those unknown numbers who sought her help and depended upon her generosity. Always frugal to herself, she was ever prodigal to the needy, and none who asked of her were found wanting.

When at last death came to claim her, her work was finished, and she quietly yielded her hitherto unconquerable will to one stronger than her own. Indeed, her peaceful acceptance of that higher Will, and her quiet resignation to It, were in striking contrast to the turbulent spirit and unswerving self-assurance that had guided her long life, and served to emphasize the unpredictability of that forceful character which Swami Vivekananda had admired and loved[12].

Over the years, Tantine had kept up correspondence with Swami Virajananda, who was president of the Rama-krishna Order from 1938 to 1951. Swami Shraddhananda, who was secretary to Swami Virajananda, has written about the regard for Tantine which Swamis Vivekananda and Virajananda had. He writes in *The Story of An Epoch*:

Swami Virajananda had long held immense regard and admiration for that dynamic personality, which had been imbued so completely with the ideas and ideals of Vivekananda. Once Swamiji had remarked about her, “She is a gem; her heart always melts in kindness.” Another time he wrote concerning her: “She is like a great political leader and can rule a kingdom.” During the passing years, Miss MacLeod had faithfully written to Virajanandaji from time to time[13].
On being informed of Tantine’s death, Swami Atula-nanda wrote to Ida Ansell on October 21, 1949:
Tantine had an eventful life and during trying conditions she has been of invaluable service to our Mission, interceding with high officials and straightening misunderstandings.... The last few days [of her life] she must have fretted much, being dependent on others! But she was unconscious much of the time. The news will be a shock to the Swami [Prabhavananda] who had just left [for India]. But though one feels the loss, one cannot feel sorry for her.... Here [in India] the general reaction is, “Now she is with Swamiji.” Anyhow, it is good to think so[14].
In another letter, which is undated, Swami Atula-nanda paraphrased from a letter Tantine had written when she was in New York, probably in the 1940s:
[Tantine writes:] “I have learned to ‘wait and see’. So many things solve themselves if you will give time enough. Any and everything is fun with those who love.”
About death she writes, “The Readiness is all! and not to hang onto a body worn out or diseased. The permanent is already within us. ‘Know ye not that ye are the sons of God?’ and that is the thing to remember, I think. People say, ‘Why talk of death?’ as if it were a curse instead of a blessing, when it comes. Why not recognize it, the Inevitable?
“I would like to die away from family or friends, for death is -- must be -- a great experience, and to be watched for each breath must be diverting for the one undergoing the experience, don’t you think so?”[15]

[1] Friends Coll., recorded by Swami Atulananda in letter probably written April 1940.
[2] Letters SN II, #727, p. 1173.
[3] Pravrajika 13havaprana, "Jose phine Macleod," VK, July 1989, p. 268.
[4] Whitmarsh, 1986.
[5] Whitmarsh, 1983.
[6] Late and Soon, p. 45.
[7] Swami Aseshananda, Glimpses of a Great Soul: A Portrait of Swami Saradananda, pp. 22- 23.
[8] Swami Yogeshananda, letter to author, December 4, 1988.
[9] "Josephine Macleod or Tantine," (Obituary), PB, November 1949, pp. 448-50.
[10] "Notes and comments," PB, December 1949, p. 494.
[11] "Miss Josephine Macleod, A Disciple of Swami Viveka nanda," VK, November 1949, p. 356.
[12] Sister Amiya, "Josephine Mac leod," (Obituary), V and W,Jan-Feb 1950, pp. 28-31.
[13] Swami Shraddhananda, The Story of an Epoch, pp. 277-78.
[14] With the Swamis, p. 297.
[15] With the Swamis, p. 295.

REAL FRIEND, REAL DISCIPLE

Tantine liked to tell a story about how Vivekananda was once lecturing to a huge crowd in New York City. He was at his best, she said, and the audience of about a thousand people seemed to be in rapture. There was not a sound; they were hanging on his every word. Then abruptly he stopped, bowed with a nod to the audience, and left the platform. Later Tantine asked him what had happened. He said to her: "I felt such an inflow of strength and power that had I continued, it would have spoiled my message. All those people would have become my disciples, and I don't want disciples. I want everyone to get free by their own efforts."[1]

Freedom. It was Tantine's watchword throughout her life. And Swami Vivekananda had taught her: "That which makes you strong and free, that is Truth."

Perhaps Tantine liked the story of Swamiji's leaving the lecture platform because in her own mind it validated her repeated denial that she had ever been his disciple. "I was only his friend," she would say. However, there is another important element in that story: Vivekananda said that those people in the audience would have *become* his disciples -- not necessarily would they have asked to be his disciples. The Katha Upanishad tells us, "It is attained by him alone whom It chooses." (l.2.23)

Did Tantine have any choice in the matter? There is evidence that she actually was Swami Vivekananda's disciple, whether she knew it or not. There is also evidence that, being a true disciple, she was a also true friend to Swami Vivekananda.

Tantine's experience with the William Sturges phase of her life, with its equivalent of jet-set living, had taught her well that such a life did not offer the Eternal; that the pleasures it offered were subject to quick change without notice. And even while she was living that fast life of ease and pleasure, she seemed to be more a cooperative participant than an instigator. As Sister Nivedita once remarked, Tantine got her experiences through others. That was enough for her. She could *co-exist* with the worldly life, but she wasn't deeply touched by it.

In other words, she had some degree of discrimination and some idea of dispassion. She knew, before she met Swami Vivekananda, that there was something Real she needed to find and that she would not find it in worldly things. In Swamiji she recognized the Real as truth and freedom.

Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that Swami Vivekananda personified what she was feeling. As has been said by those who heard him, "He spoke from the depths of his own realizations, and his words penetrated[2]."

As recorded in Chapter One, Tantine wrote in her reminiscences that she and her friend Dora went to Swami Vivekananda that first spring of 1895 and asked him to show them how to meditate. He told them both to repeat *Om* for a week and then report to him. When they reported (Joe saying that she saw a glow in the heart) he had encouraged them both, saying, "Good, keep on." And one must assume that she did just that. Marie Louise Burke states that though Tantine disclaimed discipleship, "this [instruction] from Swamiji was initiation."[3]

Marie Louise Burke has also recorded, as mentioned in Chapter Six of this book, that Swami Vivekananda gave Tantine a mantra at some point, and that she later told him, "Swami, I can't do this [repeat the mantra.]" And he had told her, "Don't worry." Later, as she told Swami Abhayananda, when she was in India that mantra suddenly welled up inside her and began repeating itself automatically[4].

Sri Ramakrishna said, "The human teacher whispers the mantra in the ear of the disciple; the World Teacher puts it in his heart[5]." Swami Vivekananda was a World Teacher, and he once said, "With great teachers the use of words is not necessary -- as with Jesus[6]...." Joe's experience with the mantra shows that it was placed in her heart.

Marie Louise Burke has also written, as recorded in Chapter Six of this book, that when Swami Abhayananda was asked whether Tantine had been Vivekananda's disciple or his friend, he

answered: “She was his disciple. I know it very well. But she looked upon him as more than her guru -- as her own self[7].” It is an awesome and wonderful statement, showing surely that Tantine experienced deep within herself Truth of a very high order. Sri Ramakrishna said: “The Chosen Deity and the Atman are identical. The vision of the Chosen Deity is equivalent to Self-Knowledge.”[8]

Swami Shraddhananda was asked to explain Tantine’s statement that she was Vivekananda’s friend, not his disciple. This was his response:

As it strikes me, theirs was a deeply spiritual relationship. Tantine was an unusual woman; she worshipped God as Freedom, and this ideal she found in Swamiji.

The word *friend* is a general term which can be applied to any case of deep faith, understanding and love. A mother is a “friend” to her son or daughter; the husband or wife is a “friend” to the other. Here, friendship is raised to a high status. So, to Tantine, discipleship was formal and remote, but friendship was above all such formality.

In fact, Tantine was much more than a disciple. Her attitude to Swamiji was a combination of many relations, and she felt this relationship could be expressed by the word “friend.” Swami Vivekananda in one of his poems addresses Sri Ramakrishna as “friend.”[9]

Tantine always undervalued herself. She did not realize what she was. She saw herself as having no renunciation, but one sees that she had renunciation. She made no claim to meditating, but others witnessed her meditation. She said she was not Vivekananda’s disciple, but she carried his message with her very life. Once Katherine Whitmarsh remarked, “Tantine always said she was never Swamiji’s disciple, *but he never had a better disciple*!”[10]

Swami Chetanananda was asked about the meaning of Tantine’s statement, that she was Swami Vivekananda’s friend. This is how he answered:

In India, monks regard all women as either mother, sister, or daughter. “Friend” denotes a more equal relationship. Swamiji’s relationship with each person was different. To Mary Hale he was a brother; to Mrs. Hale he was a son; to Sister Nivedita he was a father. Tantine was very, very pure and very powerful. Swamiji said, “She can wield a kingdom.” The highest relationship has no higher and no lower. There is no inequality in the highest relationship. If one is higher than the other, then either one person comes down to the lower level, or the other comes up to the higher level. Otherwise there cannot be a harmonious relationship. Strictly speaking, she was his disciple. The person who carries the guru’s message is the disciple.

Great Souls like Ramakrishna and Vivekananda initiate in many ways: It may be by a mere glance or wish; it may be by a touch; it may be by a mantra. Swamiji’s initiation was not ordinary. By a mere wish or glance he could initiate and transmit power. Tantine’s life proves that she was empowered by Swami Vivekananda[11].

One recalls that Sister Nivedita once wrote to Tantine about Swami Sadananda’s own analysis of her relationship with Swami Vivekananda, saying, “She [Yoyo -- JoJo] is *friend* -- you [Nivedita] are child.”[12]

Some people seek out a teacher because they want someone to take on the burden of their spiritual welfare. They are takers. Tantine was a giver. She came to Swami Vivekananda only to serve, and we believe she perceived discipleship as being a great burden and responsibility for the guru. She always protected Swamiji and did not want to think of herself as placing any burden (“*any sort of weight*”) upon him. She protected him and took care of him in as many ways as she could. She saw to it that he was well taken care of by others also.

To be a disciple, she must have thought, would be to place certain demands on him -- or at least place one in the position of being able to ask for certain things. She would not have wanted that. In addition, a guru naturally feels certain responsibilities for a disciple. She would have wanted none of that, for no reason other than that she loved Swamiji dearly and did not want to put that pressure on him. When he would stay with her family and wanted to be alone, he was left alone; when he wanted to talk, he was given freedom to talk for hours. “*Days without speaking*,” she wrote, “*days and nights of continuous speaking. We followed his moods, and kept ourselves busy in our own lives and happy when he wasn’t about, so that there was no sort of weight put upon him*.”[13]

As Swami Jitatmananda has remarked, Tantine came only to give "with the passion of a prophet's follower[14]." And as Swami Vivekananda himself once told Sister Nive-dita about Joe: "*You know I have told you -- she is my good star -- but she is broken up. She must rest. She will not rest long -- neither she nor I can do that, and she strains every nerve to find the money I want. She must not do that. I shall not be a burden*."[15]

Here one sees both guru and disciple protecting each other, as best friends protect each other.

Further, Sister Christine once explained how Vivekananda treated friends and disciples. She wrote:

When speaking of some of those whom we did not know, [Swamiji] was careful to explain, "He is not a disciple, he is a friend." It was an altogether different relation. Friends might have obvious faults and prejudices. Friends might have a narrow outlook, might be quite conventional, but it was not for him to interfere. It seemed as if even an opinion, where it touched the lives of others, was an unpardonable intrusion upon their privacy. But once having accepted him as their guru, all that was changed. He felt responsible. He deliberately attacked foibles, prejudices, valuation -- in fact everything that went to make up the personal self.[16]

"*Hands off! What have you ever done*?" -- Vivekananda had shot those stinging words at Joe in India when she remarked critically about a Vaishnavite's caste marks. She had never done it again.

There is another sign that Swami Vivekananda considered Joe more than a friend, according to what Sister Christine has said. Sister Nivedita mentioned it in a letter to Joe, written June 25, 1899. She wrote: "[Swami Vivekananda] said that he had made you shed torrents of tears many a time by the outrageous things he had said to you. Had I not yet found out that where he loved most he scolded most?"[17]

A disciple cannot bear to hurt her or his guru. Their relationship is eternal, pure, and absolutely unconditional. It is my belief, then, that by Tantine's vigorous denial of discipleship, she thus proved herself Swami Vivekananda's true disciple as well as his true friend.

[1]With the Swamis, p. 292.
[2] Lillian Montgomery, "Reminis cences of Swami Viveka nanda," talk given April 22, 1955, Vedanta Society of New York.
[3] New Disc., 3:24.
[4] New Disc, pp. 96-97.
[5] New Disc., 6:24.
[6] New Disc,6:24.
[7] New Disc., 3:96-97.
[8] Swami Chetanananda, "Swami Akhandananda," Ramakrishna as We Saw Him, p. 241.
[9] Swami Shraddhananda, letter to author, November 22, 1988.
[10] Whitmarsh, 1988.
[11] Swami Chetanananda, interview with author, March 21, 1987.
[12] Letters SN I, #35, p. 109.
[13] Culme-Seymour Coll., December 19, 1913.
[14] Swami Jitatmananda, "Josephine MacLeod," VK, Febru- ary 1983, p. 60.
[15] Letters SNI, #60, p. 191.
[16] Rems., p. 194.
[17] Letters SNI, #51, p. 169.

Josephine MacLeod,
New York, ca. 1880s.

Josephine MacLeod,
Stuttgart, 1885.